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THE GROWING PASTOR

JAMES G.K.
MCCLURE



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The Growing Pastor

BY JAMES G. K. McCLURE

AUTHOR OF "LIVING FOR THE BEST," "A MIGHTY MEANS OF
USEFULNESS," "POSSIBILITIES," ETC.



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THE APPROACH

This book is written at the request of fellow-pastors. It is a pastor's—not a sermonizer's book. Many other suggestions might be expressed besides those it mentions, but its limited pages give space only for limited statements. Brief and unpretentious as it is, I earnestly hope it will have a mission in glorifying the pastorate to every man now in it and in glorifying it to many a brave heart as yet unconsecrated to it. Observation, alike in largest cities and in smallest villages, convinces me that the church's power and mankind's blessedness rest supremely with pastors. My whole soul enters into this attempt to magnify and halo the inestimable importance of the wise, noble and consecrated pastor.

JAMES G. K. MCCLURE

LAKE FOREST, ILLINOIS.

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“Being desirous to please Him, for whom I am and live; and considering with myself that the way to please Him is to feed my flock diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a pastor’s love, I have resolved to set down the form and character of a true pastor, that I may have a mark to aim at; which, also, I will set as high as I can, since he shoots higher that threatens the moon, than he that aims at a tree.”—George Herbert.

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THE PREËMINENT WORK OF THE PASTOR

THERE never has been a time in the history of the Christian church when the pastor, and especially the growing pastor, was more in demand than to-day. A pastor, in the religious use of the word, is one who shepherds souls. His work is thus a distinctively spiritual work, dealing with the motives, ideals, purposes and conduct of those whom he tries to help. He himself is impelled to attempt this work through the inspiration he has received from the gospel. All the benefits Christ came into the world to confer he aims to make applicable to the hearts that are about him. He is a lover of the welfare of his fellows. He would be glad to benefit them in every phase of their living. He stands ready to counsel in household matters, in business perplexities, and in all temporal and material affairs. But his chief desire for men is to reach and bless the seat of all their joy and sorrow, the source of all their ambition and purpose—the soul. He believes that if he can make the fountain right, he will have done much to make the stream right. He therefore

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argues that while others are physicians for the corporeal, are lawyers for the material, are teachers for the intellectual, and are leaders for the political, he is set apart for the spiritual. So set apart, he regards his field as of preëminent importance. The first and last element in every man's character is the soul—the element that admits of likeness to the spirit of God. Because the care of the human soul is assigned him the pastor believes his mission greater than any other mission of beneficence entrusted to man.

The manner in which the pastor does his work is the manner of a shepherd. Perhaps it ought to be added, is the manner of a "good" shepherd. Christ was eager to draw a clear distinction between the untrue and the true shepherd. The untrue shepherd was the one who watched over sheep for the benefit he himself secured by such watching. This was the hireling type, the type that really did not care for the sheep, but cared only for wages and self-comforts. A pastor of this kind had no genuine love for the sheep, and when an hour of peril came he naturally protected his own selfish interests and left the interests of the flock to protect themselves as best they could.

Pre-eminent Work of the Pastor

It is no such mercenary, selfish type of pastor that is in mind in our idea of the Christian pastor. The Christian pastor finds in Christ his example. Christ loved men, knew men, sought men, fed men, led men, protected men, and was willing to die for men. Whatever a brave, devoted shepherd of sheep did for sheep Christ did for men. He found the wanderer and laid him on His shoulder beside His heart. He noticed the absence of the individual from safety and peace. He nursed the sick, He dealt gently with the weary, He led no faster than the tired could go, He bound up the broken, He made His voice familiar, He created confidence in His safe leadership, He carried the young in His bosom, He gave such food and drink as were nourishing and He stood steadfast to His charge in their seasons of special need. Christ certainly was a "good" shepherd, a beautiful lover, protector, and saviour of the souls of men.

Whatever Christ thus was to those about Him, the Christian pastor attempts to be to the people about himself. The shepherd's work is a very close work, involving personal contact. It is not the sower's work who, scattering seed broadcast, must leave the seed, for

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he cannot hold himself near the ground to watch over every individual kernel and to keep his hand constantly on it. It is not the orator's work who, being in Athens on a brief visit and having opportunity on Mars Hill to make an eloquent speech, improves the opportunity and then must hasten away to speak somewhere else. The Christian sower's work is great and important, and so is the Christian orator's work great and important. All hail to them and all blessings on them! But the souls of men are so made by God that their needs can never be fully met until in addition to the sower and the orator there is the pastor, the man who knows these souls, loves them, speaks personally to them, guards them from their particular temptations, assists them in their peculiar trials, makes them realize that he is their unselfish, devoted friend and puts himself at their side when their sky lowers.

It is true that this title "pastor" is largely applied to men who, ordained to the Christian ministry, are regularly placed in charge of a given congregation. In popular phraseology "a stated supply" is one temporarily watching over a community of souls. So an "evangelist" is one preaching for a few weeks or

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months in a town or city. But a pastor is "settled," as we say, over a church; the idea being that he is there to stay and that the benefits of his work, as well as its characteristics, lie in his continued comradeship with the hearts of his people.

In one sense it is scarcely fair to appropriate this title of pastor only to ministers in charge of congregations. Every Sunday-school teacher should be a pastor. The sphere of opportunity for such a teacher is exactly the sphere Christ Himself filled when He was a pastor. He really was more like such a teacher than like a minister standing up in the pulpit to preach. The Sunday-school teacher meets his opportunity and accomplishes his work only as he shepherds souls seven days out of seven. The very fact that his flock is small makes possible an individual shepherding that is not so possible when the flock numbers hundreds. It is the pastor-teacher who in the Sunday-school has the delight of seeing pupils grow into likeness to Christ: it is only such a teacher who can possess the power whereby he "keeps" the souls entrusted to him, saving them from error and holding them firm in truth.

There are week-day teachers also who are

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pastors. Benjamin Jowett of Balliol College, Oxford, watched over young men who came to his instruction rooms, guiding their thoughts, inspiring their purposes, regulating their ambitions, purifying their motives, until he was entitled to be called a "pastor-teacher." These pupils were his "care"; he bore them on his heart, he watched over their needs, he wrote them letters of interest in hours when he fancied they were burdened and he ever gave them a clear, ringing summons to noble, Christlike living.

Let us say, then, that any one who shepherds souls is a pastor, and so gather under this splendid title all those workers, the world over, who in homes, in schools, in association houses, in reformatories, lovingly try to lead the lives of others into the green pastures and beside the still waters of God's grace. What a useful body of people that title stands for! They are those who, taking the blessed truths of God, have so fed them to individual men and women, to boys and girls, that the human heart has been nourished in those truths. They have brought the Christ very close to people and have been the best friends of foolish, tempted, wandering, thorn-caught humanity the world has ever

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known. It was Ambrose that, bearing long and dealing lovingly, patiently and wisely with Augustine, won him from the world to the Master. All through the generations of the Christian church it has been the pastor who has rescued the lost and refreshed the weary and guided the ignorant.

The need of the pastor is to-day as great, if not greater, than ever. All over the large cities there are multitudes of men waiting for a trusted messenger of God to come alone to them, to sit down beside them, to talk over their interests, to impart an atmosphere of comradeship and gently bring to bear the Christian principles upon their daily lives. Men are hungering for winsome indications of personal affection. They hear the earnest words of the pulpit, but they distribute those words over the whole audience. They listen to appeals for their benevolence both on week day and on Sunday, until they are in danger of feeling that all a minister wishes from them is their gifts. The thing they are waiting for and the lack of which they feel so deeply, is the presence of a man of God at their individual side, who has come to be their friend, their comforter, their guide, their sympa-

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thizer—a man who seeks not theirs, but themselves, and seeks themselves for their own sake alone.

I write these words with a burning heart. I am sure of my facts. All these bankers' offices, all these clerks' desks, all these mechanics' factories, all these laborers' tasks have hearts that are crying out for a true pastor's interest, an interest that they may see and feel. The work of the pastorate never loomed so large and important as now. Literature, even religious literature, is abundant. Men and women can obtain it and use it in any spare moment. The drive of business life and of social life is constant. Specialism divides off every kind of work until two kinds of work overlap less and less. But in all this literature, drive and specialism, one feature of to-day comes out with more and more prominence, that is, *no one but a pastor is doing or will do the work of shepherding souls, and multitudes upon multitudes of men feel that they are as sheep without a shepherd!*

'To do this work of the pastor, to go to these men and feed them, heal them, rebuke them, and lead them, is a taxing work. It taxes mind, heart and spirit alike. It calls for nerve

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and it uses up nerves. It is a very patient, prolonged, particular work. It takes time and strength from other fields of effort. No wonder men shrink from it and weary in it. No wonder that they turn to other spheres of benevolent labor. No wonder that they magnify the place of preaching, the place of teaching, the place of printing, the place of administration, and so let their emphasis pass off from the pastorate. But still the fact remains that in this present age, if never before, the great, and I think the greatest need in the Christian world is the need of pastors who in Christ's spirit—as with Nicodemus, as with Zaccheus, and as with the blind man cast out of the synagogue—shall seek the individual, shall keep seeking him, and shall lovingly apply to him the consolation and inspiration of the gospel.

It is not oratory, not literature, not education that our Christian world needs most to-day, but it is shepherding, the self-denying, wise, loving, particular comradeship of a trusted pastor, with the individual needs of the soul of man.

“When God has laid particularly heavy burdens upon men, how often he has endowed them with a large degree of the saving grace of humor. It was so with Luther in his heavy task, and with Hugh Latimer in his. It was not so with the English Puritans of the seventeenth century; the very salt of the earth, but they could not see a joke; and that was one reason why their splendid enterprise ended so forlornly in the restoration of Charles II. But it was so with Abraham Lincoln; there was humor for you, for a balance-wheel, a pledge of sanity, a tie of sympathy. I am very much in earnest about this; if you should forget everything else, I say, please remember this. For myself, I do not know that any book outside the Bible has helped me so much, when I needed help most, as the Memoirs of the immortal Mr. Pickwick. Cervantes’ famous hero would come in for a close second, if I could read his story in the Spanish. And the dear old Autocrat of the Breakfast Table! We have it on the best authority that a merry heart doeth good like medicine. With all respect for our friends, the doctors, you might better leave your whole medicine chest at home than your good humor.”—W. R. Richards, D.D

The Pastor's Physical Life

THE PASTOR'S PHYSICAL LIFE

THE spiritual life of any man is his main life. The spiritual life is that which inspires motives, gives color to emotions and directs purposes. It lies deeper than ethics or morality, it is their spring, their fountain head. The spiritual life decides the atmosphere of the soul. Let that atmosphere be pure and invigorating and the soul flourishes. But let that atmosphere be malarious and depressing, and the soul's condition is sure to be unsound.

While the truth is indisputable that to every man the welfare of his spiritual life is of the greatest importance, that truth takes on a startling impressiveness in the case of the pastor: his success as a pastor is absolutely dependent upon the vigor of his spirituality.

This emphasis on the spiritual in no way decries the place and the importance of the physical in a pastor's life. Health of body is often a requisite to health of soul. It is universally acknowledged that a sound body for a sound mind represents an ideal condition. When Elijah's physical forces were depleted he lost courage and patience, and became a spirit-

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ual weakling. The man under the juniper tree who had no heart for the interests of God's kingdom was physically exhausted; he was sleepless and foodless. Refreshing rest and palatable food were essential to his spiritual energy.

In this respect Elijah does not stand alone. Phillips Brooks, with his great body and marvelous vitality, seemed the very expression of the bravery he taught. He made difficulties and discouragements appear inconsequential, and many a man smiled at his own ministerial perplexities, because he caught the tonic of Phillips Brooks' vigor. But when Phillips Brooks became a bishop and the frets of his engagements wore upon his physical energy, he too found that depression would seize him—unless he fought it off by a powerful exertion of his will. Spurgeon, with all his robustness of soul, a robustness that made him seem like a great spiritual giant, saw life through clouded glasses when the physical forces were low.

There have been men who carried themselves triumphant over all physical ailment. Pascal and Baxter, subject to continued physical weakness, seem to have had special grace from God for their sustained gladness of soul. So too

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did Dr. James B. Shaw, of Rochester, N. Y., who on the fiftieth anniversary of his ministry in that city said: "One secret of my long pastorate and long life is my conscious weakness. This drives me to the Lord. I go to him with everything. When you consider that I am a hereditary dyspeptic, that I am extremely diffident, that I am a light sleeper, sometimes deprived of sleep for nights and days together, that I have always carried a heavy load, you cannot fail to see that I have had strength from God." Robert Hall and Adolph Monod were rare instances of the triumph of the soul over physical ailments.

But the ordinary man is like Joseph Parker, who before preaching took a bath that he might be "resilient" as he entered upon his services. Most men, all men with rare exceptions, are far more helpful, see duties in a brighter light, are better able to give cheer and to make the gospel winsome, when their physical condition is vigorous. Sydney Smith declared, "I delight to stand in the free air of heaven, my feet on God's green turf, and thank my Creator for the simple luxury of physical condition."

The growing pastor will look out for his physical welfare. He is justified in desiring to live

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as many years as he can, that he may have more and more opportunity for growth and so for usefulness. He makes grievous mistake if he eats or drinks what hurts him. He also makes mistake if he needlessly and unguardedly puts his health in peril. It is a great privilege for a pastor to continue living, and living, to grow. Many a man who seemed dull and incapable when he began his ministry has kept plodding on for many years, and those years have given opportunity to develop. Had he died at the outset of his ministry he would have accomplished very little, for he was no Robert M. McCheyne nor F. W. Robertson in personality or pulpit force. A growing pastor thanks God for each new year of his life because that new year, if he has physical strength, enables him to advance his Master's cause. It is right then to consider the things that help or interfere with bodily health. Proper hours must be taken for rest. Wearied energies must have time for their refreshment. Each pastor must learn for himself the best methods whereby he can conserve his powers; no other pastor, however successful his own method may be to himself, can tell what method a second pastor may use to his advantage.

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The growing pastor will learn how *he* can best study, best work, best visit, and best rest. The golf links may do for one, while a sofa does better for another; music may be a panacea for one, while a brisk walk is the panacea for another; solitude may bind up one man's health, while another is never so refreshed as after pastoral calls. Let each man find for himself his elysian field, ever remembering that when work is hardest, duties most numerous and demands most incessant, he may be sure that "protected exposure is no peril." It is true, too, that in every pastor's life there come days when God never designed that he should stop one instant to consider whether he will grow or not, but simply consider whether he will meet an immediate need or not. Then nothing confronts the pastor but the direct doing of a present deed.

It is not wrong, however, for a pastor to wish that he may live a good three score years and ten, and always be growing into more power for his blessed Lord. He is justified in desiring the happiness of having long, long years of robust health in which to bring larger and still larger glory to the Master's cause!

Let then this incident be told as indicating

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how one pastor was helped in the preservation of his health. His brother came to him at the outset of his ministry and said: "You are going into the ministry. Let me suggest one thing to you. Never speak about being 'tired.' You know how the ministers in our city come into my store every few days. When Dr. H—— comes, and I say, 'How are you to-day, Doctor?' he replies, 'I have been very much occupied lately with special addresses and unusual work, and I am really feeling very tired.' When Doctor B—— comes, and I say, 'And how are you to-day, Doctor?' he replies, 'I have attended four funerals this week already and many of my people are sick, and I am trying to call upon them, and the consequence is I am tired, very tired.' Don't you," said the brother, "as a minister say anything about being 'tired.' Other people are tired as well as ministers. Keep tiredness to yourself."

That suggestion, heeded by the young pastor, has been, in his judgment, of inestimable benefit to him. The effect of it has been that he has never intentionally protruded his bodily ills upon the attention of others, he has studiously kept silent concerning his weariness and con-

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cerning any mental distress that might be his, and has endeavored to put into the hearing of others and into his own hearing only words charged with ozone and vigor. Such words have had the effect of inspiriting his heart and imparting tonic to his life.

“There are few men in the ministry who know how to make their machines work at a high rate of speed, with great executive energy, without damage to themselves. It is an art to be healthy at all, but to be healthy when you are run at the top of your speed all the time is a great art indeed.”

“No book is worth anything which is not worth MUCH, nor is it serviceable until it has been read and re-read, and loved, and loved again; and marked so that you can refer to the passages you want in it, as a soldier can seize the weapons he needs in an armory, or a housewife bring the spice she needs from her store.”—Ruskin.

The Pastor's Intellectual Life

THE PASTOR'S INTELLECTUAL LIFE

EVEN though the superlative value of the spiritual in the pastor's life is unceasingly proclaimed, still it is clear as sunlight that the importance of the intellectual in his life likewise should be unceasingly proclaimed.

The usefulness of a pastor depends largely on his mental ability. If he can bring forth treasures new and old from God's Word, state them in their beauty, illustrate them until they become plain as pictures, and make them answer the inquiries of men's souls, he accomplishes his mission, he becomes a faithful herald of the gospel. But if he fail in any of these particulars, his ministry is impotent. Going amongst men, he must know enough about the subjects he represents to make his fellows respect him; standing in the pulpit, he must speak sentences that command the consciences of his hearers. The apostles may have been "unlearned men" in the sense that they were not graduates of any advanced school of liberal education, but they knew how to handle the great truths of human life in such a way

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that no thoughtful man could afford to despise their words; they could state propositions so plainly that those propositions carried conviction. No one can do more.

There never has been an era in the history of God's people when the pastor was not asked to be intellectual. To-day, it would seem, more than ever in the past, the pastor who shall meet all the questionings of human hearts concerning the origin of life, the nature of inspiration and the formation of the canon as well as the questionings concerning Theism, the Deity of Christ and the thousand and one problems of social and individual duty, needs to be mentally alert, capable and energetic. The pulpit of the pastor is meant to be a throne whence the words spoken shall be as unquestionable as truth. To have that pulpit such a throne demands the keenest, strongest intellectual life that the pastor can nourish.

Three lines of development should then demand the attention of the growing pastor. One is the line of mental discipline. He should aim to have his intellectual powers more and more alert, seeing truth the quicker, understanding its application the sooner and judging men and matters with the larger accuracy.

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It becomes almost a surprise to the pastor who for years has studiously applied himself to exegetical study, homiletic statement and pastoral visitation to see how Scripture opens to his "sesame" and reveals its treasures almost upon the instant of his approach. What he could not do at first at all, or if at all, with the greatest difficulty, because he did not know how to handle his tools and did not understand his material, he now does with the alacrity and joy of skill. If anything in the world is sad, it is a pastor who bungles with his tools and misunderstands his material after thirty years of service in the ministry. Perception, grasp, judgment, aptness, should have become his long since.

Intellectual resources likewise should be sought by the growing pastor. Here it is well to draw a clear distinction between mere reading and assimilating thinking. "The world of mankind," it has been said, "may be divided into two classes, those who read and those who think." In a certain sense Bacon was right when he asserted that "reading makes a full man." But there is another sense in which he was wrong in this assertion. It is not what a man eats, but what he assimilates that nour-

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ishes him. Many readers are no stronger after reading than before. Jonathan Edwards read with pencil in hand, not to make record of other men's sentiments, but of the sentiments aroused by the reading in his own mind. One of the beautiful possibilities of a pastor's life is that he can take a thought, go out calling with it, turn it over and over in his mind, apply it here and apply it there, let it ramify in all the directions which the needs about him suggest, and then come home with a heart crowded with new ideas. No, it is not the amount of reading that a man does that gives him intellectual resources, but the amount of pondering he does on worthy ideas; ideas that, brooded over, hatch out; ideas that grow in grandeur, beauty and power the longer they are considered.

Then, too, the growing pastor seeks development in ability to do his work. More and more work comes to any man who continues in the pastorate, and the question is how is he to do it. If his experience grows, if his methods of labor clarify, if his resources accumulate, then he may hope to be up with his work and not to be outrun by it. Here is where the value of accuracy, of punctuality, of full-measured fidelity, practiced in the earlier ministry,

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serve so helpful a mission in the later ministry. The pastor acquires habits of full stint, of hearty industry and of prolonged continuance that give him momentum, a momentum that carries him straight into the future with constantly accumulating force.

There should then be an earnest craving in every pastor's heart for intellectual growth. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God," the Apostle cries. To this cry the pastor responds, "Yes, and 'O the wondrous opportunity granted a pastor not alone to search into those riches, but also to apply them to the needy souls of humanity!'"

It is, however a mistaken view to think that intellectual development, apart from the power of common sense, necessarily adds effectiveness to a pastor's work. The mother of Daniel Gabriel Rossetti is quoted by her son William as saying: "I always had a passion for intellect, and my wish was that my husband should be distinguished for intellect, and my children too. I have had my wish and I now wish that there were a little less intellect in the family so as to allow for a little more common sense." Common sense affords as wide a field for study and application as any one of the sciences.

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Happy the man originally gifted with common sense! Happy also the man who not possessing it has wit enough to search for it as for pure gold!

It will be a sorry day for the church of Christ and a sorry day for the individual pastor when he slights the cultivation of intellectual power. He may fancy that inasmuch as Ahithophel, whose wisdom was as the oracle of God, turned traitor, and inasmuch as Solomon, whose mental resources were unparalleled, gave himself to vanity, there is no necessary connection between intellectual power and the service of the truth. No, there is no necessary connection, no connection made necessary by the very nature of the case. But when such power is *consecrated* to God, there cannot be too much of it for the welfare of the church. The more a pastor becomes like a learned Moses or like a learned Paul, the more useful he can be to God's cause. There is indeed a kind of wisdom that is foolishness with God, and there is a science falsely so called. But there is also a kind of wisdom on which God lays largest benedictions—the wisdom that He uses in every great onward movement of His children. He never makes a commanding advance for His

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people, excepting under the leadership of a strong mind, a mind strong for the particular work required at the time and place. Wickliffe, Huss and Luther; John Robinson of Leyden, Thomas Guthrie of Edinburg and Alexander Maclaren of Manchester; Finney, Moody and Drummond, all were men who, according to natural talent and as opportunity allowed, made the very best of their intellectual power.

“When the procession of your powers goes up joyfully singing to worship in the temple,” said Phillips Brooks, “do not leave the noblest of them all behind to cook the dinner and to tend the house. Give your intelligence to God.” Yes, and let that intelligence be each pastor’s *own particular intelligence*. Much of the intellectual power of a pastor will come from his so incorporating truth that that truth becomes himself. He may not expect, he should not expect to see any feature of life exactly as another sees it, for no other sees that feature from his particular viewpoint and with the lights and shadows of his individual angle. It is a great day for a pastor when learning—

“God fulfills Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,”

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he also learns that God fulfills Himself through the individual expression, the individual knowledge, the individual thought-power and the individual experience of every pastor. The "magazine-fed" preacher will never know the deep currents of human life. The pastor who merely echoes another's thought will never develop forceful personality and so will always lack the power that comes from such forceful personality. In his reverence for the worthy past he is "to stand upon the old paths," but in his reverence for his own individuality he is "to look out for the new paths." Emphasis will shift with him from time to time; to-day it will be upon the inexorable nature of the divine law and to-morrow upon the merciful tenderness of the divine love. Proportion in statement will likewise alter from time to time; to-day he will deal more largely with the duties of activity and to-morrow with the duties of meditation.

But there will be one feature of his intellectual life that will know no shadow of wavering; his enlarged and ever-enlarging conception of the majesty, worthiness and adorableness of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It may be said, and said without fear

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of challenge, that the consecrated intellect of a pastor will find no stimulus to intellectual growth so effective as the study of the character and wishes of *God*. When a pastor's intellectual resources are not helped by the reading of Milton, Bunyan and Shakespeare, when they are not helped through the biographies of Calvin and Dean Stanley, when reviews, essays and commentaries wholly fail to arouse him, then let the pastor study *God*—God in nature, God in Moses, God in David, God in Isaiah, God in Christ—and try to grasp Him in all His beauty, wondrousness and power—try to express Him to his own heart and to the hearts of others, express Him in all His fullness, glory and attractiveness—and as sure as daylight is to follow night, it will follow that the pastor will grow in intellectual power.

“Whatever he speaks of divine things he must speak in the language of humanity. Nay, more, he must speak the language of the humanity of his own day. But he must not be the mere echo of the thoughts of men—a voice answering back to the voice of their weakness or their despair. He must be more than the mirror to human nature. Of him we may say, as Schiller said of the poet: ‘He is the son of his time, but pity for him if he is its pupil or its favorite. Let some beneficent deity snatch him when a suckling from the breast of his mother and nurse him with the milk of a better time.’ The preacher must be nursed upon the breast of Heaven. He must draw his inspiration from the world which is the world not of shadows but of realities. He must be the voice, even if it be in an irresponsible wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. He must be the herald of that which never dies in a world wherein all things seem to die. He must restore the poetry of hope to mankind.”—Hugh Boyd Carpenter, D.D.

The Pastor's Spiritual Life

THE PASTOR'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

VALUABLE as physical health and intellectual vigor are to the pastor, still it is true, indisputably true, that the spiritual life is his essential life. It is essential to himself, for it determines his standing in the sight of God, and that standing surely is the main thing of importance to the pastor. God looks beyond the body, beyond the brain, to the sources of all thought and desire, and according as those sources are right and beautiful to the eye of God the man actually is right and beautiful.

The spiritual life of the pastor is essential to his usefulness with others. Personality is the chief element of his power. Above all words or deeds the spiritual tone of a pastor, which is the pastor's personality, determines his helpful influence. That personality reveals itself in his public prayers and in his unpremeditated conversations. Like the perfume of Mary's broken box of ointment it cannot be hid, but it breathes in the very atmosphere of the man, and soon the strength or weakness of his spiritual life is known. If that spiritual life is

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strong, men are helped thereby. There is nothing which the world at large so quickly recognizes as a man who has dwelt in the secret place of the Most High and who comes forth from the very presence of God. Every Moses whose face beams with the reflected glory of the unseen God is accredited by men as a divinely charged messenger. The ministry is not a priesthood, save as every believer is a priest; but the minister who enters oftenest into the holy of holies and has heart converse with Jehovah is received by his fellows as one whose words have peculiar worth. It was because John was seen to be leaning on Christ's bosom and so was known to be near the heart of the Master, that the disciples at the last supper beckoned to him to ascertain and then make known to them, the mind of the Master. Men are everywhere looking for the pastor who lives close to Christ, and when they find him they are more ready to listen to him than to any other and to believe that his message should be revered by them.

The better the opportunities the world has of judging of the spiritual life of a pastor, the larger the necessity that that spiritual life be vigorous. The evangelist who travels from

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place to place and the teacher who stays only temporarily in a community may expect that their spoken words will center the thought of those whom they address. It makes less difference, then, with their usefulness whether their spirit is always serene and sweet and loving. But with a pastor-preacher it makes all the difference in the world, seen as he is continually, whether the eyes that trace the spoken words back to the spirit that inspires them find that spirit self-controlled and gentle and holy. The nearer a preacher lives to people, the nearer he needs to live to God.

Spiritual life flourishes only as it has care.

This is true of all spiritual life, in whomsoever it may be. It has its helps, and those helps are many and are great. We do well to recall them and ponder them, and give them their due significance. The forces in God's universe that are for spiritual life are more than the forces that are against it. Christ is stronger than Satan, and Christ is with every soul that seeks the Father's glory. All the events of time and space work together for the good of the soul that loves God. It actually becomes unnatural for the redeemed soul that has passed from death unto life to do wrong.

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All Christian people should stand before the spiritual life as Joshua and Caleb stood before Canaan, and believe that victory is sure and that all dangers are simply an opportunity for glorious conquest. The helps to the spiritual life are such that all hearts should be encouraged to enter upon it and all should know that they will succeed.

But the spiritual has indeed its dangers. Only foolish men are blind to them or dull to them. Again and again men have begun the spiritual life and have failed in it. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" is a question often applicable. Souls once free become entangled again in a yoke of bondage. First love is left. "Oh, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" Disciples who seemed to breathe the very air of heaven have at last acted as though they were suffocated. It is the sorrow, the unspeakable sorrow, of every pastor that so many of his people who started for the Celestial City dropped out by the way. Fear and the Slough of Despond and Vanity Fair proved too trying for their spiritual life.

The pastor is like other men in that he has helps and dangers to his spiritual life. Among his helps are his sense of responsibility for

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souls, his constant test of truth through reference to Scripture, the necessity of clear perception of the meaning of Scripture and his dependence on the Holy Spirit for the success of his work. A man can serve God just as truly and live near God just as truly being a mechanic, a car-driver or a mercantile clerk as being a preacher. But it cannot be disguised that when a man is called upon to make his one supreme thought the religious life of his fellows, and is freed from the ordinary distractions of business that he may the better do his work as such a pastor, he has very great helps to the cultivation of his spirituality.

But side by side with these helps are his peculiar dangers. He, too, is a man, and all that threatens the heart of any other threatens his heart. Beside, the pages of history show very clearly that religious surroundings are often unfavorable to spirituality. Never were there more earnest people than those of Christ's day, but the pet sins of religious surroundings characterized them, envy, jealousy, and such extreme exaggeration of non-essentials as caused mint, anise and cummin to have more of their thought than justice, mercy and humility. Like many a preacher since

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their time they were so diligent in watching over the supposed interests of religion that they neglected their own sweetness of soul. Busy here and there with details of outward form, they allowed the spirit of meekness to escape them. They ran on errands on which they were not sent. They, as has been the case with so many of their successors, were supposedly friends of the bridegroom, and stood in the streets awaiting Him, but they failed to have the oil of spirituality in their lamps, and when He came they did not light Him to the wedding feast of redemption.

If now the question is asked, What are the dangers peculiar to a pastor's life to-day? the answer is both negative and affirmative. Negative, in that it may safely be said that controversial bitterness is a comparatively small danger. Men ought to thank God that the theological rancor that eats out generosity and humility has so minor a place in this present generation. Christian men, in such a land as the United States at least, have learned to hold their theological views in earnestness but in love. They therefore avoid that peril of hatred and prejudice and unfairness incident to much of religious antagonism. "He is a wonderful man,"

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said the sage, "that can thread a needle when he is at cudgels in a crowd; and yet this is as easy as to find truth in the hurry of disputation."

Nor is there special danger to the spiritual life of the pastor from doubt about the mission of the Bible. That Bible is accepted as the very expression of the will of God, able to make any soul that receives it, wise unto salvation. The Bible is seen in a new light, but that light instead of minimizing the value and beauty of the Bible, magnifies its value and beauty. Pastors were never so sure of the adaptation of the Bible to the ends it has in mind. They may interpret many of its teachings from a different view-point than they once did, but that new view-point is a larger and truer conception of the God in whose light alone they can see light, and thus the Bible is more authoritative and more clearly infallible in its mission than ever. Thus pastors are saved from exposure to spiritual weakness through doubt concerning God's word. A changed emphasis and an altered proportion in the teachings of the Bible give opportunity for a gladder development of the spiritual life.

There are, however, some positive dangers that threaten the pastor's spiritual life to-day.

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One of these is the tendency to depend too much on machinery. It is the day of organizations, committees and meetings. The theory is announced, "Let the church be open all the time and let something be doing in the church all the time." That theory and other theories more or less like it, make pastors anxious to have "something doing" every hour. It seems as though their work could not be going on aright unless all sorts of societies were organized and there were as many different kinds of societies as there are different temperaments in the congregation. The fellowship of the pastor's heart thus becomes a fellowship with machinery rather than with the Holy Spirit. The dependence for success lies with organization rather than with Him "who works when, where and how He will." The pastor is so absorbed in keeping up his machinery, adjusting it when it moves with friction and worrying over it when for any reason it is disabled, that his heart is not fed by contact with individual souls to whom he comes as the very medium of the Holy Spirit Himself. Thus he misses that blessing of travail for souls which is the energizing life of a spiritual ministry and he realizes the truth of Edward Caird's phrase: "The

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idea creates the organization, the organization destroys the idea."

A second positive danger to-day is the tendency to estimate success by numbers. That tendency led David astray, and it may lead other earnest hearts astray. The statistic habit is epidemic. Success in any matter means the largest possible figures. In business it is the largest number of dollars, in college the largest number of students, in newspapers the largest number of readers and in books the largest number of copies. Philanthropic effort is likewise put to the test of the muster roll. That muster roll has to be considered. The pastor does well to know how many are present at services of God's worship; attendances at prayer-meeting, Communion and Sunday-school are significant. There should be great searching of the pastor's heart by himself when people are absent and when numbers decline.

But let not numbers be a snare. Matthew Arnold declares, "We worship the book of Numbers." The most successful church is not necessarily that which can boast an overwhelming roll call. The individual and his development may be lost sight of in the multitude. More pains may often be required per-

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manently to benefit one soul than temporarily to collect a crowd. We are to look to quality as well as to quantity. He who can nourish "the remnant," whereby the earth shall be redeemed, is doing a larger work than he who is surrounded by a multitude that never accomplish anything. Besides, there are churches in which, from the very nature of the surroundings, the attendance at the prayer-meeting, evening Sabbath service and even other services is bound to decrease. The Master Himself saw men leaving Him and was obliged to say to the few who remained, "Will ye also go away?" It would have hurt His spiritual life then, as it would have hurt it on Palm Sunday when multitudes flocked about Him, to estimate success by numbers. Nevertheless there are hundreds and thousands of pastors who feel that their work prospers or fails according to the numbers who under their ministry are added to the Communion roll. Such an estimate of success pulls down the spiritual life of any preacher, and materializes it.

A third positive danger of to-day is the tendency to be discouraged. In Mr. Galton's book on hereditary genius there is a statement that a gently complaining and fatigued spirit

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is that in which evangelical divines are very apt to pass their days. There is ground for this statement. Most pastors are in danger of carrying heavy hearts. There is much to make them heavy hearted. "Who can laugh," asks Longfellow, "when he thinks of the sorrows of mankind?" The pastor must think of those sorrows; it is part of his life work to think of them and to be a "son of consolation." So thinking of them he undertands their causes, he sees the part sin has to do with them, he also sees how foolishly and continuously the hearts of men turn away from the cure for sorrows provided in the gospel, and seeing all this, month after month, year after year, the evil so great and the soul of man so perverse, he is tempted to be discouraged. The number of earnest pastors who to-day are burdened with a sense of their inability to do the work that should be done, and who consequently have tears in their eyes and hearts, is multitudinous.

All such pastors, however, are entitled to remember that their mission is to bring joy to the world. They should be more filled with a sense of the fullness of the gospel than of the woe of man. God never puts a pastor where that pastor should not be a happy, bright, win-

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some soul. He must believe the promises of the world's redemption, and must always be sounding trumpet tones of hope. God is not dead, nor is His cause dying. The battle may wage disappointingly to us, in our day and place, but it is waging victoriously to others, in their day and place. No pastor ever knows whether the long night of his toil that has brought nothing, may not be followed by a morning in which the nets shall be full of fish. The progress of God's kingdom is sure. Some Stephen may seem to fail, but some Paul will take up Stephen's incomplete work and greatly advance it. He who would draw the world to Christ must be continuously hopeful and brave.

A fourth positive danger of the pastor to-day is the tendency to minimize the value of little occasions. Great audiences, public addresses and scholarly preparation seem to many men the field of their opportunity. They chafe under the necessity of spending their strength with a handful of men, of using their energy with an individual and of suffering interruption in their studies. Many men allow themselves to become pettish and almost irritable over these seemingly unworthy requirements. They commiserate themselves on their

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bondage to trifles and come perilously near to injuring their usefulness through their irritability.

A pastor in Chicago, asked to deliver an address before a large body of influential people, was in his study, preparing that address, when the servant handed him a visiting card. The name on it was that of a man who had lately moved into his neighborhood, but of whom he knew nothing. The pastor looked at the card, felt that he could not spare time to see the visitor, thought he would send word through the servant that he was too busy for an interview, concluded that he could spare time and started for his parlor. He was irritated by the interruption, and felt like showing his irritation. Fortunately he let the visitor speak first. "My wife and I have been awake all night, thinking of our soul's welfare. I have come to ask you to help us find Christ!"

The result of that interview was that the visitor and his wife soon united with the church. But had the pastor's pettishness expressed itself in a single word of rebuff, one of the greatest opportunities of usefulness would have been ruined. "Lord, bless our interruptions to-day, and use them in Thy service, and

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for Thy glory," is a petition wise men have uttered and wise men still utter. Experienced preachers are the surest to bear this testimony: "Again and again I have come near missing my best opportunities for influencing souls, because I was peevish over an interruption."

*"Why do I dare love all mankind?
'Tis not because each face, each form
Is comely, for it is not so;
Nor is it that each soul is warm
With any Godlike glow.
Yet there's no one to whom's not given
Some little lineament of heaven,
Some partial symbol, at the least, in sign
Of what should be, if it is not, within,
Reminding of the death of sin.
And life of the Divine.
There was a time, full well I know,
When I had not yet seen you so;
Time was when few seem'd fair;
But now, as through the streets I go,
There seems no face so shapeless, so
Forlorn, but that there's something there
That, like the heavens, doth declare
The glory of the great All-Fair;
And so mine own each one I call;
And so I dare to love you all."*

—Henry Septimus Sutton.

Helps to a Pastor's Spiritual Life

THE HELPS TO A PASTOR'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

NOW that we have considered the dangers that threaten the pastor's spiritual life, let us gladly turn our attention to the wondrous means of help that are provided for that life.

The first is, Giving the Holy Spirit His chance.

In the history of Israel we find that Jehoram the king had turned away from Jehovah. The king of Moab rebels against Jehoram, whereupon Jehoram makes alliance with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the two kings together go against Moab. They and their armies are soon in danger of dying from thirst. They bethink themselves of means of relief. "Is there not a prophet of the Lord that we may inquire of the Lord by him?" Yes, there is Elisha. They seek Elisha. He does not like Jehoram, a wicked king. Jehoram's presence disturbs his whole soul. He feels like having nothing to do with Jehoram. But for Jehoshaphat's sake, whom he respects, Elisha will consult God for

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them. "Bring me a minstrel," he says. He wishes to be calmed and quieted, and put into a mood wherein God can communicate with him. The minstrel is brought. As he plays, Elisha's bitterness and unrest of soul disappear. Then God speaks to him, and Elisha, sweet spirited and receptive, hears God's message. He has given God His chance.

There are times in my own life when I need the minstrel. The continuous details of the pastorate make my heart as indurated as stone and my eyes as dry as glass. Then I go into a quiet room and take a story like that of Ian Maclaren's "His Mother's Sermon." The Scotch boy had been dedicated to the ministry by his mother. When she was dying she called him to her bedside. She felt for his head and stroked it. "I canna see ye noo, John, but I know yir there, an' I've just one other wish. If God calls ye to the ministry, ye'll no refuse, an' the first day ye preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ, an', John, I'll hear ye that day, though ye'll no see me, and I'll be satisfied." The minute afterward she was dead.

Five years later John, after taking university honors, is to preach his first sermon in his

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church. He writes it, out of the abundance of his scholarship. It deals with Semitic environment and is trenchantly critical. But before the Sabbath comes, his aunt reminds him of his mother's dying wish: "Speak a gude word for Jesus Christ."

He bows upon his knees, thrusts his sermon into the grate, remembers how his mother in his boyhood knelt each night by the white curtains of his bed, and he cries, "My mother, my mother!"

Then he prays: "Help me to speak a gude word for Jesus Christ." The Sabbath comes. He goes into the pulpit. It is Jesus, only Jesus that is in his heart, beside that mother. "As he preached, the preacher faded from before all eyes. The people saw only the Nazarene, heard only the Nazarene, felt only the Nazarene. The women wept quietly, the rugged faces of the men softened as when evening sun plays on granite stones. He spoke a gude word for Jesus Christ, and the people were blessed."

In the study he met his aunt. When he looked on her his lip quivered, for his heart was wrung with one wistful regret.

"Oh, if she had only been spared to see

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this day, and her prayers answered.” “Dinna be cast doon, laddie, nor be unbelievin’. Yir mither has heard every word, and is satisfied.”

This is the story. I read it, and somehow my heart softens, my eyes fill with tears, my soul opens with new desire to serve Christ, I grow braver, sweeter and gladder. The quietly subduing minstrel has done his work. My life has wide doors to the Holy Spirit, and I am now ready to listen to His words and undertake afresh His blessed work.

A second means of help to the pastor’s spiritual life is holding fast to his love for mankind. We are to distrust any view of Scripture or of society that does not fire us with love for our fellows. Something is wrong in us when our theories of life dull our interest in the men and women who are immediately about us. We are forgetting their sorrow, or overlooking their needs, or are becoming absorbed in some personal ambitions of our own. “The cure of souls is the *ars artium*.” It is to be the most absorbing energy that ever lays hold on the heart and mind of man. Mankind are to be our passion. The lower they are the farther down are we to bend that they

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may be lifted. The wider they wander, the more patient must be our search. The oftener they repel us, the oftener we must pity and seek them.

There is always the possibility that our scholarship or refinement or dignity may separate us from those for whom, under God, we sought scholarship, refinement and dignity. Unless our powers are instruments of helpfulness to men they are signs of our spiritual deterioration. We must not grow away from *men*. The one supreme idea of our work is service to *men*. "Peace, good will to *men*" is the announcement of the gospel. But we can become so engaged in building up a reputation for usefulness as to care less for individuals than for our reputation. It was love for man that made Christ a good minister. He never spoke for the sake of speaking, but always for the welfare of those who were about him. Having loved his own, He loved them until the end, and served them, with the towel about His waist and the bowl in His hand.

"O, Lord, that I could waste my life for others,
With no ends of my own!
That I could pour myself out into others,
And live for them alone.

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Such was the life Thou livedst: self-abjuring,
Thine own pains never easing,
Our burdens bearing, our just doom enduring—
A life without self-pleasing.”

A third means of help to the pastor's spiritual life is realizing God's presence in his work. God *is* in His world. He has never withdrawn, and He never will withdraw. He is here to succeed. He is succeeding. He assigns our lot, and it is always an important lot. Fidelity in it means our contribution to a general result that is certain to be good and large. No man need envy his neighbor. Each man's field of opportunity demands all the energy he possibly can give it. Half done work in small places tends to weaken the worker and retard the cause. The man that fills his place to overflowing is sure to be asked to help fill another place.

We are to believe that God is with us and is with the work intrusted to us. We are to crowd our hearts with the promises of God. We are to be Abrahams, faithful in present duties and seeing Christ's day of victory afar off. Christ *will* conquer. Word from far and near tells us He is conquering. That word should kindle fire in our souls. We should be aflame with hope. If, as in *Pilgrim's Prog-*

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ress, Satan attempts to put out the fire, suggesting the evils and the difficulties of the work, we should let Christ feed the fire by pouring on it His infinite and sure promises.

It is impossible to overestimate the beauty and the power of ministerial faithfulness. Simeon, the university preacher at Cambridge, England, was once so oppressed by the sense of his incompetency to meet the needs of his intellectual surroundings that he resolved to leave Cambridge. Just then the scene when Simon Peter, fearing persecution at Rome, was fleeing and was met by Christ, came into his mind. "Whither was Christ going?" "Christ was going into Rome, to be crucified." So Christ answered to the inquiry of fleeing Simon. The answer touched Simon's heart. Ashamed of his unfaithfulness he turned back to Rome, there to be crucified with his head downward.

This scene so affected Simeon's mind in his hours of weakness, that he, saying "my name, too, is Simon (Simeon)," resolved to return to his task and do God's work in Cambridge as best he could. Over the mantel in his study he hung a picture of Henry Martyn, that bril-

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liant and erudite scholar, that splendid and sublime man, so that every time he looked at it he might seem to hear a voice emanating from it and saying, "Be earnest, be earnest, be earnest."

Dr. John Watson, too, has a picture which always calls to him to be faithful in his ministry. It is of Christ, by Andrea del Sarto, representing Christ after His passion, full of peace and majesty. Dr. Watson looks into that face in times of burden and discouragement, and it always answers back with a look of calm strength and accomplished victory. He looks into it when his life has not been completely dutiful, and it seems reprovingly but tenderly to ask of him a more devoted service, for has not He, the Christ, died for men!

I also have a picture that refreshes and inspires me. It is of Hosea. It is the face of Hosea painted by Sargent and placed among the Prophets as they are shown on the wall of the Public Library in Boston. For over sixty years Hosea was God's preacher to Israel. He brought to Israel God's words of comfort and of rebuke. How he longed to help the nation! But they turned a deaf ear to him. Nevertheless he stood in his place and did what God

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asked of him. For sixty years he was faithful, absolutely faithful. Sargent has put Hosea among the weeping prophets. Well he might weep, the sins of Israel were so many and so great. But while the other prophets standing in line with him and weeping have bowed faces, Hosea's face is to the front! They look downward, he looks forward. He is surrounded by the evils of his day, but he, conscious of them all, keeps his heart and his face to the future. He foresees the coming of the Christ; he looks far, far ahead, and he knows that God and God's truth will prevail and that all he, this prophet, has done for God will have helped to the consummation of God's glory!

Again and again I lift my eyes to Sargent's Hosea, a weeping prophet indeed, but a faithful prophet, a prophet who has his face toward God's future and who therefore sees hope, bright, beautiful, sure hope, and I gird myself anew to the work, the glad work of preaching the everlasting gospel.

"No man of conscience or imagination can be content with his work, however men may praise it, because as he works his vision of what he may achieve with heart and skill grows clearer; no man can be satisfied with his life, however rich and full, because, as a man's life deepens and widens, its needs grow vaster and nobler; nor can any man be satisfied with the love he bestows or receives, however fortunate his lot, because the very act of loving increases the capacity for loving; and as love grows deep and tender, it seeks, by the law of its nature, higher unity of spirit with spirit and the opportunity of more complete sacrifice and surrender. So the immortal within grows by all contacts with the mortal, and every relation, work, duty and pleasure has that within it which will not let us rest either in attainment or possession."—H. W. Mabie.

Necessity of the Pastor's Growth

THE NECESSITY OF THE PASTOR'S GROWTH

TO be a good pastor a man should be a growing pastor. By this is meant that he should constantly be enlarging in the elements that increase his usefulness in his distinct work. While he may indeed be growing in a hundred other ways, still he may not be growing as a pastor. It is even possible to be growing in many ideas and manners that actually tend to weaken his power as a pastor.

Whether this idea of the necessity for growth in pastoral power is deeply implanted in the convictions of ministers is not perfectly clear. All ministers are agreed in their desire that the spiritual life of individual believers should grow. Nothing lies with more weight on their hearts than such growth. Again and again they teach its necessity as well as its desirability and possibility, and they describe the means, methods and blessings of growth. A growing Christian is the most comforting delight a minister's heart can know. To see a soul slough off its sins and weaknesses, as a seed drops its retarding wrappings, and emerge

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into the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear of a beautiful Christian life makes the cup of a pastor's joy to overflow. The growing Christian is a glory to his home, his congregation and his community. "Here," we all say, "is unmistakeable evidence of the power of divine grace." Personally nothing in my whole ministerial life has so rested my heart and cheered my courage as the sight of men and women who have ripened more and more into godliness and usefulness. Well has it been written in *The Growing Christian*, "The worthiest ambition of the human soul is the desire to increase in capacity for God; to grow, and in growing to become more like God."

All ministers are agreed, too, that the spiritual life of the church should grow. The church, wherever it is, should be an outreaching power that makes an ever-increasing impression on the world. One of the most godly pastors the state of Illinois ever had, used to fix his eye on the column in the annual church reports that stated the number of adult baptisms. Then he would gauge the success of the individual church according as the number for that church was large or small. Infant baptisms to him represented what was almost

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inevitable; so did the gifts made to the great benevolent agencies of Christianity. But adult baptisms represented conquest outside the church, in the world; represented forward movement into growth. Such growth gave convincing proof that the church was answering to its end and was bringing the hitherto unreached to their Saviour. When the church not only holds its own but advances, when it both compacts and enlarges, then in the words of *The Growing Church*, "We need have no fear that the church of Christ will be defeated. It is the embodiment of power. It means victory."

Just as eagerly as the pastor seeks growth in the individual and in the church, he should seek growth in himself. He wishes the individual Christian to be sweeter and stronger at fifty years of age than at thirty. So he should wish that he as a pastor should be wiser and more effective when he is fifty than when he was thirty. Indeed, as he wishes the individual Christian to keep growing in sweetness and strength so long as the Christian lives on earth, so he should wish that he himself should increase in pastoral wisdom and effectiveness until the days of his ministry are done.

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This wish should lie deep down in his being. It should permeate his whole life. Out of it and nourished by it should spring a purpose, a clear, definite, unflinching purpose that, God helping him, he will grow, that he will aim to be more and more a good pastor every new year. This purpose will make all attained development unsatisfactory. However much people praise him or however successful he is said to be in his work, still he will feel that he has not yet apprehended that for which Christ designed him when He laid hold of him and called him into the ministry. Peril to many a pastor lies in the fact that at the outset of his ministerial life he won successes that gave him a feeling of complacency. It may be that in his youthful energy and in his hopeful enthusiasm he stepped into a field of labor where an older man than he had seemed to fail and lo, at his bright presence and before his earnest appeals so much good was accomplished, so many people being converted and so much work being undertaken, that it seemed to him his qualifications for the pastorate were unusually remarkable. He felt, perhaps, that he to a peculiar degree understood the right methods of pastoral labor, and that his social and intel-

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lectual and spiritual gifts were just what the ministry demanded. So he ceased to keep mind and heart open to new light upon possible ways of reaching men's souls in personal intercourse. "I hate to see a man whom I have known ten years ago, and find he is precisely at the same point, neither moderated nor quickened, nor experienced, simply stiffened. He ought to be beaten." So said a wise helper of his fellows, and his words suggest that even in the pastorate a man's ways may become stiffened and he have none of the pliability necessary to growth.

When we stop to think about the matter, do we not find that usually in the minister's mind the main idea of growth moves along the line of his preaching? He says, and says rightly, "I must be more and more of a preacher, else I will run to seed." Accordingly he gives time, strength and thought to the matters that will freshen and develop him as a preacher. All this effort is good effort and needed effort. But a minister should grow as a pastor as truly as he should grow as a preacher. It is true that he will hear more from the outside world if he grows as a preacher, his name oftener will be in the newspapers and one and another more fre-

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quently will quote his words. But it is almost certain that if he grows as a pastor he will be actually reaching men's souls and effectively accomplishing the purpose of the ministry, (even though his work is unpraised and his name unmentioned), as scarcely any brilliant preacher succeeds in doing. Somehow it has always been the growing pastor who has laid his hand on individual lives the firmest and impressed them the deepest; he it is who has got his ideas the farthest down into their being and permanently enthroned the Christ nearest to their heart's center.

In *Alice in Wonderland* there is a scene where Alice, after running with great vigor for a little while, suddenly stops and says, "Well." Then the Queen of the white country says, "What is it?" "Why," said Alice, "in my country when one runs and runs and runs, you get somewhere." "Oh," said the Queen of the white country, "it is not so here; you have to run and run and run to stay where you are." That is exactly as it is in the pastorate; a minister must grow and grow and grow simply to hold his own. If he is to keep at the head of his people and do his work aright, he must always and forever be pressing forward.

Necessity of the Pastor's Growth

When Absalom endeavored to win the hearts of Israel he passed rapidly from old methods to new methods. First he aimed to appear attractive to people, then he sought to place himself where his path and their paths would meet, then he learned the words of kind greeting, then he showed how attentive a listener he could be, then he expressed deep interest in their affairs and gave assurance of his concern for their welfare. It is an old saying that the wise man learns even from his enemies. So pastors are wise when they examine the methods used by Absalom and the methods used by others who in business, politics or society, seek to win influence over their fellows. To reproduce in his own high efforts whatever, being fair, upright and legitimate, is serviceable in other spheres of influence to the winning of men's hearts is the growing pastor's privilege and duty.

Growing pastors usually are growing preachers. Such pastors are the men whose companionship with others constantly brings them into new acquaintance with the needs of humanity and whose realization of the adaptation of the truths of God's word for such needs constantly deepens. Thus such pastors preach

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God's truths out of a heart permeated at the same time with the love of particular souls and with the conviction that these truths and these only can meet the needs of those souls. A man cannot be a growing pastor without wishing to be, and aiming to be, a growing preacher. The closer a pastor comes to the ignorance, waywardness and sorrow of his people, the warmer and more winning will be the message of the Sabbath. When a pastor grows into sympathy, genuine sympathy with his people, so that seeing matters from their view-point he is able to approach the discussion of those matters with his people's prejudices in mind, he is apt, if he devotedly loves the people, to speak words that go straight to their souls, words that bring a blessing and leave no resentment.

Pius X., in his first encyclical, has made a statement applicable to every part of the Christian church, as well as to his own particular communion. "While esteeming worthy of all praise those young priests who dedicate themselves to useful studies in every branch of learning, the better to prepare themselves to defend the truth and refute the calumnies of the faith, yet we cannot conceal, nay, we proclaim in the most open manner possible, that

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our preference is and ever will be for those who, while cultivating ecclesiastic and literary erudition, dedicate themselves more closely to the welfare of souls through the exercises of those ministries proper to a priest zealous for the divine glory.”

Thus Pius X. pleads for a new recognition of the usefulness of the pastor as he breaks the bread of life to the little ones and teaches the gospel to the poor and announces freedom to the captive and sight to the blind. In so pleading he meets a crying need and a large opportunity. Once again let us bring the pastor to the front, the man who shepherds souls. He will be worthy to have place at the front, if he is a growing pastor. He will continue at the front, only as his growth is constant. The growing pastor must know the troubles of men's minds better when he is sixty than when he was forty; he must be a wiser, stronger leader of the flock; he must be more skillful in applying the remedies of God's truth to the ills of his sheep; he must be more trusted by those sheep; he must be more self-sacrificing, more unselfish, more tender and more winsome.

Once a shepherd, who had led and protected an eastern flock for over twenty years, was

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asked whether he was any more capable in caring for sheep than when he first took charge of sheep. "I feel I am a better shepherd than when I began," he answered, "for I know so much more about the habits of sheep and about food for them and about their dangers than I did at first. It is a constant surprise to me to see how every new sheep has to be studied; no two of them are alike. I am sure I have grown more appreciative of their natures and more considerate of their weaknesses, and I am more and more convinced they need a shepherd's care." "And do you think you have learned about them all there is to be learned?" "All there is to be learned! No; if I did not learn something new all the time I believe I should forget what I have already learned."

*“He was so human! Neither strong nor weak,
Far from his kind he neither sank nor soared,
But sate an equal guest at every board.
No beggar ever felt him condescend,
No prince presume; for still himself he bare
At manhood’s simple level, and where’er
He met a stranger, there he left a friend.”*

—James Russell Lowell.

Possibilities of a Pastor's Growth

THE POSSIBILITIES OF A PASTOR'S GROWTH

ONE of the most interesting stories in ministerial experience is the account William M. Taylor gives of his growth in pastoral usefulness. It is a mere incident in his experience, but it is a very suggestive incident.

When he began his life as a pastor he started in to make calls accompanied by a church officer. At each new home visited he made a brief talk and offered prayer. The presence of the church officer caused him to feel that his talk and prayer should take a new form in each new home. As a consequence, he came to the end of the afternoon's calls wearied in mind and body. He soon saw that such a method of calling would break him down. Accordingly on the next round of visits he asked the church officer to divide with him the services in the homes. The church officer upon the next occasion claimed that he had engagements that would prevent him from accompanying his pastor in calling. Then, alone, Dr. Taylor started in to do his calling. He found that under

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some circumstances it was well to announce the particular streets along which he would call, and under other circumstances it was better not to make such announcement; that under some circumstances it was well to have prayer with a family and under other circumstances it was better not to attempt to have such prayer. But he found one feature invariably helpful to pastoral calling, namely, ability to connect the occasion with some religious idea.

His thought was this. Suppose he enters a house in which is Holman Hunt's engraving, "The Light of World." As easily and naturally as possible he refers to the picture and then tells a story about the artist. The story is, that some years ago a minister was a guest in the home of the gentleman who owns the original painting. At the time of his visit the picture was undergoing the process of reframing, and so he was permitted to examine it minutely. In one of the lower corners, where the words would in ordinary circumstances have been covered by the frame, he found, in the handwriting of the artist himself, this expression: "*Nec me praetermittas, Domine.*" "Nor pass me by, O Lord." So Dr. Taylor

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suggests "from the prayer of the painter a very natural lesson, all the more powerful because of its incidental character, may be read to the possessor of the painting."

It is in ability to use the pastor's sphere for such appropriate application of truth that the pastor may grow. The man who never can be a powerful pulpit pleader can be a powerful parlor pastor. It is all a question of resources, of sensitiveness to the situation and of grace in choosing the word for the hour. Such resources can be accumulated, such sensitiveness can be cultivated and such grace can be obtained by practice.

Here it is that every bit of information a pastor can secure may eventually stand him in stead, especially information that serves to link the material with the spiritual, the temporal with the eternal. The value of general culture in the pastor thus becomes clear. The more he knows about the ordinary articles that fill a home, that occupy an office, that are part of a factory or farm, the more material he has with which to link a thought that may lead souls straight into the light of God. He meets the boy at the plough and describes to the boy the eastern plough with its one handle

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and then applies the words “having put his *hand* to the plough.” He meets the youth at the loom, and then he tells how David Livingstone worked in a mill and educated himself for God’s service. He meets the road-maker, and he refers to Hugh Miller who broke stones for the highways of Scotland and carried lofty purposes in his heart the while. He tells the woman in her silks of Lady Huntington and Elizabeth Fry, and touches on the beauty of their Christian consecration. He meets young women in their ease and refers to Sister Dorothy and her gift of herself to the healing of England’s sick. He talks with the scholars about George John Romanes and his studies in natural science, and of Romanes’ ultimate rest in the Christian faith.

There is not a worthy picture known to the pastor, nor a worthy statue, adornment or machine, nor a worthy book that may not be a means of assisting the pastor in his usefulness. He does rightly in craving to know about the things that are of concern to his parishoners. Business men are pleased when pastors have intelligent acquaintance with their business and show interest in it. There are hosts of people who feel that the pastor dwells in a world aloof

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from their own, and that the pastor would not say on Sunday what he says if he had actual acquaintance with the affairs of life as they have; the pastor seems to them visionary and impracticable, and his principles impossible. It is a super-incumbent necessity, if he is to make his words accomplish their end, that he mingle with men and bring his own holy character into touch with the affairs of their lives. "Children, have ye any meat?" Christ asked as he drew near to the disciples whose business was the fishing business. "Have you caught anything?" No, they had not. Then He gave them such business advice as He could give. He showed Himself their interested friend, interested in their business. They were ready now for some new revelation from Him, and He was aware of their readiness.

Merely to go into a home to show off one's learning is despicable in a pastor. It is dragging the gold of God in the mire of selfishness. The true pastor never is anything but a pastor. He is not an artist, not a lecturer, not a gentleman, not a scholar for the sake of being an artist, lecturer, gentleman or scholar, but for the sake of being a pastor. He has no passion but the passion of souls. Every interest of his

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life springs from and returns to this passion. He wishes knowledge, that he may use it for the spiritual help of men. He is glad to be recognized and even praised if thereby he can have free access to the hearts of his fellows. He rejoices when money comes to him, because he hopes by it he shall have larger opportunity of reaching the needy. And he is pleased when his manners are accredited as gentlemanly, because he hopes that now an avenue of approach is available to him whereby he can influence special persons for his Master.

To meet the openings thus presented in an active pastorate requires all the resources that a pastor can secure. Cecil was right when he said of the minister: "He is a merchant embarking in extensive concerns. A little ready money in the pocket will not answer the demands that will be made upon him. Some of us seem to think that it will, but they are grossly deceived. There must be a well-furnished account at the bankers."

This, however, is true, that the pastor who occupies his mind and heart deeply with the affairs of his people and with the affairs that should interest them, has a stimulus for his own

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education that is powerful and unfailing. Here it is that every pastor can grow. He may never have the intellectual acuteness that enables him to understand the writings of metaphysicians, he may lack in ability to fathom the depths of "the philosophy of the categorical imperative," nor may he ever be able to grasp the intricacies of mechanical contrivance. But he can know the concrete facts of human life and he can know the great truths of history and he can know the meaning and the application of the principles of Christ, and in such knowledge he can grow, grow with each new year, grow splendidly and well. It is most assuring, the way in which such a devoted pastor grows. Each soul becomes a study to him, an arousing study. He has an end in view in all his work. It is not desultory. There is a special reason why he reads and thinks. His attention now notices facts that hitherto were scarcely observed, and if observed, were not pondered. His interests broaden as his concern for individual souls and homes broadens. It seems as though the windows of his mind had clearer glass in them than before and as though the eyes that looked through those windows saw farther and

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more distinctly than once. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler has said, "My motto was: 'Study God's Word in the morning, and door-plates in the afternoon.' " Was not that very studying of door-plates, and the intimacy thus obtained with the lives of the people, a stimulus in the next day's study of God's Word? And was not this motto the explanation whereby we understand why it is that Dr. Cuyler has never ceased to be a growing man and a growing pastor?

What in its larger degree has been possible to Dr. Cuyler is in its own degree possible to all pastors. Mr. Moody, student of the Bible as he was, would never have understood that Bible and would never have been able to preach it as he did, had he not gone constantly into the inquiry-room and constantly, too, to any homes that wished his presence. He himself once told how when he was in Dundee he was asked to call upon a poor man who had been bedridden for a long time. He went as though he was to be the giver of a blessing to the sick man. He had not been long with the man before he found that the man was giving him a blessing. Leaving the sick room he said: "I believe that when the angels pass over

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Dundee, they will stop at this house for refreshment.”

How could Dr. Frederick W. Farrar have ripened as he did and have preached as he did unless he had been a visitor in the neighborhood of his church. His stout words against intemperance, his intrepid words against dishonesty, his scathing words concerning impurity and his pitiful words concerning life's woes and pains and agonies, how could they have been penned and spoken had he never visited in the parish of Saint Margaret's as it lies about Westminster Abbey? The secret of it all is this, he put method into all his activities—method in study, method in writing, method in recreation, and method in pastoral visitation. He once stated that with all his manifold offices there was not a case of sickness or trouble in the parish of Saint Margaret's that he did not personally attend. His three curates made the ordinary parochial visits, and among the four every one of his parishoners was seen, but he himself followed up the cases of need.

It is not, however, the visitation of the sick and dying that alone produces growth, even though Spurgeon once said from his pulpit, “I

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have been this week to visit two of my church members who were near eternity, and both of them were as happy as if they were going to a wedding. Oh, it makes me preach like a lion when I see how my people can die." It is the visitation of the strong and the active that likewise produces growth. It makes a man preach like a lion when he sees how his people can live and do live. That is, if the pastor genuinely loves them, loves them as his own soul, and thinks, studies and preaches for them.

A pastor may go among his people in a formal way, carrying a dry heart and a cobwebbed mind; in such case he brings home a drier heart and a more heavily cobwebbed mind. But if he goes purposing to find their lack, to study their temptation, and to love them into the kingdom of grace, with every element of heart and mind alert, its tentacles stretching out in mid-air to lay hold on every helpful idea that can be reached, then he is sure to grow in heart and mind alike, and to become an ever increasingly effective pastor.

“Lord, give me the blessing of Jacob—his best blessing—his power to bless. Make it impossible for me to stay at the top of the ladder, even though that be Heaven. Send me down the golden stair—down to the pillows of stone, down to the nights of sorrow, down to the limbs that are languid, down to the souls that are sad. Send me with a breath of Eden, send me with a flower of Paradise, send me with a cluster of the grapes of Canaan. Send me to the hours that precede the daybreak—those darkest hours which come before the dawn. Send me to the hearts without a home, to the lives without a love, to the crowds without a compass, to the ranks without a refuge. Then shall I have the birthright of the first-born: then shall I have the blessing of the mighty God of Jacob.”—George Matheson.

Pastor's Expectancy of Growth

THE PASTOR'S EXPECTANCY OF GROWTH

IT is with a ring of gladness that Professor Austin Phelps, in his *Men and Books*, says to the pastor: "Growth is your destiny." It certainly should be so regarded. Every man who enters the ministry should feel that he has planted his feet on a highway that will carry him, if he treads it circumspectly, straight onward and upward. It is not merely that voices are always calling to him "excelsior," it is also that every feature of his work tends to supply the power by which he naturally rises higher. This is the way Dr. Phelps puts it: "Your courage should be sustained by the certainty of your mental growth. You will not always be what you are now in point of intellectual strength. Your professional labors will compel growth. Your power of mental appropriation will increase marvelously, hence will come the faculty of rapid reading. Nothing is more sure to disclose itself as a result of years of scholarly reading and professional composing in alternation, than the gift of rapid mastery in both. As you will write sermons

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rapidly, so you will appropriate books to your stock of thought rapidly. Some volumes which now would cost you a second reading, you will by and by master with one. Some which now require a full and cautious study, by and by you will appropriate by their tables of contents and their prefaces only."

It is exhilarating to believe that we may look forward to such growth as to a certainty. It makes the burden of work and the burden of solicitude grow lighter, as we foresee ourselves surely accumulating more and more strength for their carrying. The pastor's life by its very nature is a crescendo life. It seems perfectly clear that a man cannot give himself wholly to it, holding back no one of his faculties and keeping in leash no one of his possibilities, without passing from strength to strength. Dean Swift, toward the close of his career, looking at one of his books written in the zenith of his unwasted energy exclaimed with a sob: "My God, what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" But Dean Swift after the writing of that book had given himself up to distraction and self-indulgence, and so it was his progress ceased. Others, too, have done work in earlier years that far ex-

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ceeded the work of later years. Philip J. Bailey wrote his *Festus* while comparatively young, and never afterward produced any literary work comparable in strength and beauty to his *Festus*. But a true, devoted pastor, applying himself unreservedly to study and to pastoral labor, need never fear that tomorrow will find him a weaker man than today. He is bound to be a mightier man in knowledge of truth, in love of souls and in efficiency of influence. He may study such an one as Tennyson, starting with his "Airy, Fairy Lilian," and slowly expanding into his world-moving "In Memoriam." He may watch the character of one like Abraham Lincoln, who in his debates with Douglas expressed now and then "a note of personal antagonism," but who in his later speeches and addresses went higher and higher until all personal bitterness seemed to die out of him and he could say: "I have not willingly planted a thorn in the heart of any man." So a pastor may believe that like Tennyson he will grow in ability of expression and like Lincoln in worthiness of character.

There ought then to be spring and elasticity in the heart of a pastor. Cheerfulness should

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be his characteristic. "This time now at hand is a good time," he should say, "and a better time is coming." It was John's vision, seen in exile on narrow, far-alooft Patmos, of the resplendent city of God coming down from heaven to earth and making all earth rejoice, that transformed present Patmos into a garden of opportunity and haloed the future with a sanctifying beauty. The world's to-morrow is always to be better than its to-day, and so is the true minister's future always to be better than his past or present. Present work is therefore to be done with a verve that gives it a relish. Full work, overflowing work, the measure pressed down and shaken together, is to be done day after day, year after year, as a glorious privilege. "I hate," says George Eliot, "to see a man's arms drop down as if he was shot, before the clock's fairly struck, just as if he'd never a bit o' pride and delight in his work. The very grindstone will go on turning a bit after you loose it." So it will, and even if at times the pastor's work seems to him much like the work of a grindstone, still let him turn and keep turning and rejoice to turn, that by his very turning he may show the world how truly his heart is in his work and how he

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gladly will spend and will be spent for the good of human souls.

The dull and the gloomy have no rightful place in a pastor's thought. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" is a Scripture telling us that the bright side of the gospel is the larger side, and telling us, too, that only as a pastor lives, prays and labors in that larger side is he living, praying and laboring as a gospel pastor should. The comfort that comes into a pastor's heart when he actually believes that God is marking out his pathway and is protecting every step he takes in it, is most consoling. What strength Bushnell's sermon, "Every Man's Life a Plan of God," has brought to the people of the pulpit as well as to the people of the pew! Likewise comfort, consoling and strengthening comfort, may come into a pastor's heart from the belief that God is surely leading him on to growth and will make him more and more of a man for Him.

A late book, written in London by the pen of Canon Newbolt of St. Paul's Cathedral, deals with what he calls "Some Secret Hindrances to the Realization of Priestly Ideals." Let us drop the word "priestly" and use, what

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Canon Newbolt really means, "ministerial" in its place. What then are these hindrances? He names them as Vanity, Sloth, Despondency, Impatience and Self-Neglect. If in the thought of an observant, scholarly, earnest fellow-pastor these are hindrances to a pastor's growth, they should be examined one by one until their full nature is realized, and then they should be resisted to their death.

There are tendencies—every pastor knows the fact—to vanity, in the pastor's life. His very place as leader is his because in some respects he is the most competent man in the community for the place. To be a leader is to be exposed to pride. And as to sloth, is it not true that the pastor, unlike so many of his fellows, is not obliged to report at an office every morning at a given hour and stay there a requisite period? More largely than many men he may do what he pleases with his time, so long as a certain few engagements are kept regularly. Then there is despondency; it walks straight into many a pastor's study and sits with him almost as a welcome guest. Also there is impatience; it is a sort of shadow to enthusiasm. The enthusiast and the philosopher differ only in this: the enthusiast is eager

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to have his idea carried out immediately, the philosopher realizes the need of time in which to carry it out. And as to self-neglect, yes every pastor is aware, sadly aware, that again and again he has tried to pull out the mote from another's eye when the beam was in his own eye. "Lest I myself should be a cast-away," Paul said of himself, and so saying he warned every pastor of the danger there may be in self-neglect. Out of touch with God may put us out of touch with man.

"Only a word, yes, only a word,
That the Spirit's small voice whispered, 'Speak';
But the worker passed on, unblessed and weak,
Whom you were meant to have stirred
To courage, devotion and love anew,
Because when the message came to you
You were *out of touch* with your Lord.

"Only a note, yes, only a note,
To a friend in a distant land;
The Spirit said, 'Write,' but then you had planned
Some different work and you thought
It mattered little. You did not know
'Twould have saved a soul from sin and woe—
You were *out of touch* with your Lord.

"Only a song, yes, only a song,
That the Spirit said, 'Sing to-night;
Thy voice is thy Master's by purchased right.'
But you thought, 'Mid this motley throng,

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I care not to sing of the city of God.'
And the heart that your words might have reached
grew cold—

You were *out of touch* with your Lord.

“Only a day, yes, only a day,
But oh! can you guess, my friend,
Where the influence reaches and where it will end,
Of the hours that you frittered away?
The Master's command is ‘Abide in me,’
And fruitless and vain will your service be
If *out of touch* with your Lord.”

The knowledge of these hindrances, however, should not appal the pastor, but should arouse him. Forewarned with him should be forearmed. Every pastor should say: “Where I am in danger of being weak, there I will put forth special effort to be strong. I will make vanity give way to humility, sloth to activity, despondency to hopefulness, impatience to perseverance, and self-neglect to godliness.”

What will be the outcome of such a purpose? This, that the pastor will fit better and better into his place, and will grow more and more into likeness to Christ. This does not mean that his work or his progress will always satisfy him; they probably will sorely disappoint him. He will look back from time to time over the record he has made, and compar-

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ing it with what he intended that record to be, he will be humbled; not humiliated, but humbled. Such humility, however, will be his beauty and his strength. As life goes on nothing is so attractive as tenderness, love and peace. There comes a time when wit and cleverness and grandeur of knowledge, splendid as they are, do not accomplish so much for the Master as sweet friendship and winsome godliness. As the pastor grows toward the endless life, with its open vistas of God's sinless and beauteous heaven, he should, like Moses in the mount, have more and more of the light of God radiating from him. On into the years he may go, "growing older" as the saying is, but growing younger in the buoyancy of his hope, in the brightness of his spiritual vision and in the charm of his personal presence. Caleb's long life gave special value to his declaration of confidence in God. Samuel's many years made his recital of God's faithfulness the more impressive. Paul could write and did write increasingly helpful words as he became "Paul the aged." And John gave to the world its clearest, most winsome conception of heaven when he was past fourscore years old.

If any man among all the multitudes who

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fill the various spheres of life's honorable activity is to be congratulated on his opportunity, it is the pastor, the Christian pastor. To him the Great Shepherd of souls has entrusted His work. Over him the angels that are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, watch with protecting solicitude. Before him are the souls of the children of men, in their pathetic need, waiting for his sympathy, love and provision. Ready for him is all the wisdom, strength and grace of the world's great Lover. Waiting for him at the gateway of the eternal fold is the Head Pastor who knows each sheep the under pastor has aided and each sheep he has guided homeward. Who, if not he, should grow? Who, if not he, should always grow? Who, if not he, should not only throb more and more with earth, but also thrill more and more with heaven?

“The weary man, the little child,
The vigorous youth, the mother mild,
Lift up their eyes and wait for me—
What shall I say to them for Thee?

“Theirs is the struggle and the strife,
Mine are the peaceful paths of life;
They are of deeds, I am of thought—
How shall I touch them as I ought?

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“We are close brothers; all we men
Sin, and are sorry, sin again,
And climb, and slip and yet aspire;
Thou, only Thou, canst bear us higher.

“Give me, O gracious Master, power
To read the signs and seize the hour,
And with the tokens of thy love
Uplift their hearts and mine above.

“Lord, unto thee I lift my eyes,—
Inspire me, make me brave and wise
And give me faith that I may see
How wide and large thy precepts be.
Then thine own message let me take
To these Thy people for love's sake.”

*"If we with earnest effort could succeed
To make our life one long connected prayer,
As lives of some perhaps have been and are;
If never leaving Thee, we had no need
Our wandering spirits back again to lead
Into Thy presence, but continued there,
Like angels standing on the very highest stair
Of the sapphire throne,—this were to pray indeed.*

*"But if distractions manifold prevail,
And if in this we must confess we fail,
Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,
An altar heap'd and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze."*

—Richard C. Trench.

The Pastor's Public Prayers

THE PASTOR'S PUBLIC PRAYERS

ONE of the largest spheres of growth in pastoral efficiency is the sphere of public prayer. The minister that is permitted the privilege of voicing his own heart and the heart of others in timely prayers has one of the sweetest, highest, holiest and most developing privileges accorded to man.

It may be that in some instances this privilege has not received its due recognition. There are ministers who perhaps have thought that accuracy, felicity and feeling were essential to helpful preaching, but have not thought that accuracy, felicity and feeling were equally essential to helpful prayer. To think in this way is to think unwisely for others and hampering for oneself. In a non-liturgical ministry it is at least an open question whether in the course of a lifetime a pastor does not have more opportunity for aiding human souls through his public prayers than through his public speaking. There are numberless occasions when prayer is the only means the pastor may have for religious expression; if he fails to bring the soul near to God then, he fails

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entirely, his opportunity is gone. There are, too, numberless occasions when hearts can be prepared for the work of instruction only as they are first calmed and rested by prayer.

Without doubt very many ministers are now living in an environment that demands careful attention to this special phase of the pastor's work. The more æsthetic the tastes and the more refined the perceptions of a congregation become the more desirous the congregation are that the service of prayer should be uplifting to them. The demand for worthiness of expression in public prayer is on the increase. So far as we can foresee, that demand will continue to increase. We should rejoice that such a stronger demand on the part of the people forces the pastor to a new pondering of this inestimable opportunity for usefulness and for personal development through it. What shall he do about it?

First of all, he will do well if he sets true value on the ministry of public prayer. The world has always needed timely prayer and always will need it. The people needed it when Solomon dedicated the temple, and needed it when Daniel made special confession for Israel. The disciples needed it when

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Christ offered his intercessory petitions as John records them in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel story. The day for timely prayer will never cease. There will be public occasions when no liturgical phraseology can possibly accomplish the ends designed for public prayer. Many such are in the minds of men whose experience with human life is somewhat prolonged. There have been funeral occasions when the prayer, either with or apart from other services, has been the supreme benediction of the hour. There have been ecclesiastical gatherings, marked by a peculiar joy or a peculiar sorrow, in which sympathetic hearts and sympathetic voices through timely prayer have brought the assemblage to the foot of God's throne as the most beautiful words in all literature written even two days beforehand could not do. People would be deprived of a most helpful means of grace if public prayer were not timely. This is especially true of the simpler folk, and of those whose hearts are deepest touched by grief and of those who are suddenly brought into some great convulsion of soul. The pastor can never meet the needs of the people apart from the ministry of timely prayer.

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Then, secondly, the pastor will do well if he realizes the demand for proper expression in prayer. Such expression cannot be secured by mere repetition of sentences or paragraphs used by any one else. The heart of the individual pastor does not voice itself in any such way. He is wise in studying the Scriptures and in having full acquaintance with all their phraseology. The spirit of such phraseology and even the language of such phraseology cannot penetrate too deep into his nature. He is wise, too, in studying liturgies, and in knowing spiritual sentences as they occur in such liturgies and in other writings. He will learn many a lesson of dignity, beauty and appropriateness of expression from such study. But he must constantly and searchingly be on his guard lest Scripture phraseology and liturgical sentences become a snare to his own devotion and a hindrance to the devotion of his people. He may fall into the use of their familiar words as into the line of least resistance; they may become cold and lifeless to him, and cold and lifeless to others. The call to timely prayer is a call to the spirit of prayer. The pastor's soul must breathe through his utterances to have them answer to their high oppor-

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tunity. The people must be able to recognize that his soul is in them and to recognize, too, that they express exactly what they wish expressed, if they are to bring the people into the very holy of holies. If ever a pastor's lips should not hesitate nor stumble it is when he is engaged in public prayer. He is dealing with the King of kings, the Lord God Omnipotent. His words, his manner, his tone, all should lead the people unerringly and un-deviatingly into the presence of the great white throne. It is a wrong to others, it is a hurt to himself, it is a failure to the service when a pastor slights in any way the opportunity for timely prayer.

There is great significance in the fact, and the fact must not be overlooked, that books of prayer have always been in use in the Christian church. Some special persons are able to voice the needs of humanity better than others. The people feel so. Accordingly the people have taken and have rejoiced in taking the words prepared by others and have appropriated them to their own use. So the liturgical prayers of Christendom have originated. So, too, it is that to-day in many private dwellings and in many sick rooms are found copies of

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Prayers of the Ages, Prayers Ancient and Modern, Bishop Wilson's Devotions, and similar works. People often feel their own inability, through illness, weariness, distress or perplexity, to put their situation before God as it is, and therefore they resort to these books of special prayers with relief and with comfort. All this is suggestive. It makes the pastor realize the need, the indicated need, of such use of public prayer by him as shall satisfy these souls. The more emphatically does he realize this need if he sees these books of special prayer coming to have an increasingly large place in the homes of sensitive hearts. Here then is a sort of challenge to him. He must conduct the service of public prayer in a way that will bring blessings to the sensitive and weary and distressed. He must lead them in their prayer with all the sympathy and with all the gentleness of a shepherd. He must see that these people reach God's green pastures and God's still waters, and that they feel His presence with them in their dark valley.

The opportunity for growth thus presented to a pastor is both large and beautiful. It demands that he look deep into the nature of the

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hearts around him, that he study well the distinctive features of each new hour and that he use language that in that hour will be what the hearts need. This is, it is true, a discipline of mind, a discipline of perception, of putting oneself in another's place and considering what in that place would be helpful to himself; and it is a discipline of choice expression. Such a discipline is of incalculable benefit. It may do as much for the mind as discipline in exegesis or homiletics. It is much more apt to give comprehensiveness of vision to the intellect than many another discipline. But it is more than a discipline of the mind, it is as well a discipline of the heart. It puts the pastor's heart side by side with His heart who carried the sorrows and bore the burdens of His fellows. It makes prayer real to the pastor himself. His soul is in it and he pours out his soul through it. He himself comes very close to God. Where he leads the people follow, and he does lead them, himself at their head, until they talk with God face to face.

While, however, the most careful thought about timely prayer is requisite to every occasion of ministerial opportunity, it is particularly requisite to funeral services and sacramental

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seasons. Dr. Charles Hodge was summoned from Princeton to Philadelphia to attend the funeral of his brother Hugh, the distinguished physician and well-known Christian leader. Upon Dr. Hodge's return to Princeton he entered the class-room and before beginning the lesson in Systematic Theology for the day said to his class, the tears filling his eyes and tenderness choking his voice: "My young brethren, I have just come home from the funeral of my dear brother. A funeral is very solemn. It is a great opportunity. When you are out in your fields as ministers, make much of funeral occasions." Dr. Hodge's counsel was wise. It is very seldom that a funeral does not find some hearts more accessible to a pastor than at almost any other time. If opportunity for words of address to those gathered is granted, a pastor cannot overestimate his privilege in speaking these words. The pastor who can meet such opportunity wisely and well, year in and year out, is sure to grow, especially if he prepares particular Scripture selections for each occasion, of child or youth, father or mother, as the case may be, and then says appropriate words according to each special gathering.

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But it is the prayer service at a funeral that is the pastor's largest and best opportunity. Let not any pastor think that he can meet that opportunity as it should be met by entering into it rapidly and unadvisedly. There are chords so delicate that only the deft hand may touch them, there are bruised reeds that must not be broken, there are cups of sorrow so near to the overflowing that one inappropriate word will make them tremble to their centers. Well may the pastor be cautious, and well may he seek special divine guidance, and well may he weigh every utterance that is to pass his lips, as he endeavors to bring the hearts of sorrow into union with the great Father. Thus to meet fully the wondrous opportunity of a funeral occasion, year after year, requires a preparation on the part of a pastor that is in itself growth. The pastor that can always and everywhere through his prayers make a funeral a means of spiritual life to others fulfills a large mission.

Then, too, the sacramental seasons call for special appropriateness in prayer. How tender the spirit and how uplifting the words should be at an infant's baptism! How the prayer should quiet the parents, and make

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them forget their nervousness as they find themselves coming consciously close to Him who took little children in His arms and blessed them. How reverential and how penitential and how grateful the prayers should be at the communion table. In a congregation's life every observance of the Lord's Supper has its own particular significance; no two occasions find the situation of the community the same. If the pastor in his prayers at such times can make the spiritual presence of Christ real, can make the fellowship of Christian believers a communion, can make penitence true, gratitude deep, consecration complete and intercession for the unsaved prevalent, what opportunity is larger than his? That opportunity comes to him more through public prayers than in any other way. He should study the opportunity, pray over it in private, search his heart in view of it, see the needs of every communicant in the light of it and then carry to it the words that make the communion like the opening of a door into heaven to the souls about him.

The pastor who in public prayer, combining brevity with comprehensiveness, accuracy with felicity, dignity with tenderness and beauty

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with strength, brings the spirit of man into touch with the Spirit of God is the pastor whose steps are certainly ascending the upward path of growth.

*“He ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed nor wished to change his place.
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all:—
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.”*

—Oliver Goldsmith.

Advantages in a Continued Pastorate

THE ADVANTAGES TO A PASTOR IN A CONTINUED PASTORATE

ONE of the distinguishing marks of the present age is its alertness. Activity is everywhere. The conditions of life are constantly changing. Flux and reflux are all about us. Such being the situation a pastor to continue a pastor must see to it that three great growths characterize his advance, namely, development in self-control, progress in adaptation and sanctification in motives.

Every continued pastorate is sure to be attended with difficulties and even exigencies. Seasons of spiritual drought will make arid the church; roots of bitterness springing up in the congregation will cause trouble and anxiety; finances either in congregational support, building construction or general beneficence will drag heavy wheels; or the pastor's intellectual resources and nervous energies will seem to himself exhausted and he be ready to think his work a profound failure.

Even in a pastorate of two or five years such experiences may appear. They never fail to

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appear in a pastorate of ten years or longer. What is a pastor to do when they come? He may flee from them. Men sometimes do. When a church is passing through a trying period pastors have been known who leave the church. They cast their eyes afar, for a different, and, as it seems, a more agreeable field of labor, a field better adapted to their powers, and then they give up trying to conquer present environment. Or if they stay where they are they stay half-heartedly, meaning to get along as best they can until somehow the situation of itself becomes easier, as when a storm blows itself out, and hoping that a way of departure will later open.

Undoubtedly there are times in the pastorate when a pastor would better resign and go away. But the man who, called to enter the valley of Baca, makes of that valley a very well, the rain of God's heaven also filling the pools; the man who under the stress of difficulties acquires a new patience, a new self-mastery, a new self-effacement, and then leads himself and his church out of difficulties into peace, power, and prosperity, is the man who is stronger at the conclusion of his trial than at its beginning. "If thou faint in the day of

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adversity, thy strength is small" applies as much to the minister in his pastorate as to the business man in his distress. If the situation possibly admits of betterment the pastor should do his best to remedy it and not lay down his work when "things are going wrong." Every pastor needs to carry to his future labor a sense of power, a quiet, not presuming, sense of power such as inspired David when he faced Goliath, because David had conquered in his previous contests with the lion and the bear.

Apart from spirituality there are in the pastorate no requirements more essential to the holding of men's respect and the accomplishing of God's work than poise, calmness, judiciousness. It is only the pastor of the masterful soul that can study all the disturbing elements of a congregation in a quiet, clear, unruffled, unprejudiced and unselfish way and determine through God's grace to bring order out of chaos and victory out of rout. Such a study becomes necessary again and again in a continued pastorate, a study as necessary at year eighteen in that pastorate as at year ten or five or two. If a man by means of that study comes out ahead, the director and the savior of the situation, he unconsciously has accumu-

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lated strength and power. Such strength and power will never lead him to be heady, proud, boastful, self-sufficient. He knows too well that all his successes have been won through the name of the Lord God of Hosts, and so he carries himself as gently, and even more gently, than when he first rushed into his pastorate. But even in his gentleness and self-distrust, and in the fear and trembling which characterize his continuance in the pastorate, he is a surer, stronger man, because all the periods of burden, strain and misunderstanding have been used to his development, his intellectual, his social, his financial and his spiritual development. There is something glorious in having waited ten, fifteen years to rescue a soul, to sweeten a bitterness, to advance a helpful cause and then to succeed!

A continued pastorate calls also for progress in adaptation.

It is very, very seldom that exactly the same methods applicable in one pastorate are equally applicable in another pastorate, even of the same individual. Communities differ essentially. The congregation composed of farmers is not the same as that composed of merchants and educators. Every change of pastorate

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forces upon a pastor the fact that the methods employed with one set of people are not the methods with which he can expect success with another set of people. One congregation is open to the presence of an outside evangelist, another congregation responds much more readily to the heart appeals of its own minister.

Just as communities and congregations differ from other communities and congregations, so the same community and the same congregation will differ from themselves in the course of a continued pastorate. Especially is this the case in, or near, large cities; it is also the case, to some degree at least, in every hamlet influenced by the newspaper, the school and electricity. In a lengthened pastorate scarcely a method at first used successfully continues to prove successful. The great general principles underlying method abide, but the application of those principles must change. Sunday-school work, missionary organizations, young people's societies, the ordering of the services of public worship, the management of the mid-week prayer-gatherings, the church finances, the benevolent causes, the appeals from new fields of need, the altering conditions of community life, the inroads of heretical

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teachings, the whirls of novel amusements and the crazes of sudden fascinations, each and all, furnish problems hitherto unconsidered, problems that must be solved in their present phases if the pastorate is to have abiding leadership.

In a continued pastorate it becomes evident to every eye that the pastor's work is an incomplete work. Things have had opportunity to wear out. People who were leaders have had time to die, or grow old, or move away. The whole spirit of a community has had ample space in which to change. A new element may have moved in that does not remember Joseph and wishes life to put on a different coloring from that it wore fifteen years ago. Men and women who worshiped in the congregation two decades since return and looking about for a Sunday or two say: "How changed the church is!" Yes it is changed. The age is active, new ideas are in the air, new means of pleasure, new styles of business, new standards of success, and every congregation sooner or later is affected by the activity of the age. The longer the period of the pastorate, the larger the change in the congregation. So it comes about that the continued pastorate, if it

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is still to abide in power, must progress in adaptation. Such adaptation usually means a new use of old resources. The limitations in the amount and value of available apparatus thus become severe. The tools remain virtually the same; they cannot be changed or increased. Here then comes the test, the test of versatility. Ability must be developed to make old tools do new work and to make old resources supply present emergencies. "*Hic labor, hoc opus est.*" It is under this test that many a pastor breaks down. "I have piped and ye have not danced. I have lamented and ye have not mourned. What more could I do that I have not done?" he cries. It is a mournful cry, a cry born of interest in souls and of devotion to them in Christ's name. "Surely, another pastor will succeed where I fail. He has elements of power that I lack. Let him come, he will brighten up the situation, and these people will be helped. Does not Scripture say, 'One sows and another reaps.' Does not history teach that again and again a minister labors for years with smallest increase to membership but his successor welcomes multitudes who flock into membership as doves to their windows?"

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So thinking and so talking the long time pastor is tempted to feel that he should give way to a successor. But if, resolutely facing the situation and carefully studying it, he bends again to adaptation; if he once more does the best he can, consulting with such helpers as he can find, using every instrument that is at all available, and keeping at his work incessantly, self-sacrificingly and cheerily, then there is quite sure to come to him an adaptation that saves him from unwieldiness and gives him growing effectiveness. His spirit remains teachable. Saved from the danger of thinking it once and forever learned all truth, it turns eagerly to the literature and movements that in this present age aim to bless the world. It must so turn else he will be unable to continue doing his work, for in the abiding pastorate eternal vigilance, the vigilance of the open eye, the open mind, the open heart and the open soul is the price of continuance.

A continued pastorate has also this advantage, that it makes the sanctification of a pastor's motives a clear necessity.

All ministers need to study the motives that actuate them. "Why am I trying to do this work? What part has Christ and what part

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myself in my ambitions concerning it and my judgment of its success? Is my heaviness of heart due to my sorrow that Christ is not glorified or due to the thought that people will feel I am not succeeding?"

Such questions, applicable to every pastor, are especially applicable to the pastor whose term of service is extending on into the years. The *éclat* of his beginning has ceased. The longer his pastorate continues the more quietly it seems to the outside world to move. The new pastor is heralded, his methods lauded and his achievements sung. "Come and hear him" is often said. But there is nothing novel about the old pastor. He is the same man who has led the prayer meeting and preached the sermon through many a winter and summer. He is exposed to the temptation to think his work very monotonous, and to say: "I have lost my first burning love for these souls. If I could but address new souls and face hearts not calloused to my appeals, how earnest I would be! Then I would be as energetic and as unsparing of myself as ever—because I should be more hopeful."

Such talk is not foolish talk by any means. Many a man through change of pastorate has

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come to a new opportunity. Christ failing in one place went elsewhere. So did Paul, and so thousands of eminently successful Christian workers have done in all ages and lands.

But the pastor who remains in his pastorate must put down this temptation to think he could be a more earnest man in another place than in his present place. His whole possible earnestness must express itself where he is. If he is God's man and not his own, if he is in the ministry to do any kind of work God assigns him, then he must put heart and soul and mind into what is at hand and leave results entirely with God. His very situation ought to force such an one very, very often to his knees, ought to lodge deep within him the purpose: "I will study the Scriptures more diligently than other pastors for unless I constantly discover fresh truths in them, my repetitions will drone the people into somnolence. In every possible way, of scholarship and effectiveness, I will be a growing man, a man to command their confidence and even win their love. A stranger might be heard by them simply because of curiosity, but me they will continue to hear only as I am a worthy scholar, a worthy teacher and a worthy man."

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Thus it comes that the long-time pastor has special reason for examining and for rectifying his motives. He cannot sustain enthusiasm for souls and enthusiasm for intellectual force apart from inspiring motives that have wearing power. In a continued pastorate all motives wear out excepting holy motives. The community comes to know a pastor's motives. They recognize them unerringly. The longer he dwells with a community the clearer becomes its vision of his motives; and unless those motives are pure, unselfish, and loving, the long time pastor might as well preach to the winds as preach to the people about him. Human praise must not be his standard; he must rise above it. Human condemnation must not be his standard; he must rise above it too. His standard must be God's judgment and God's judgment only, as that judgment is pronounced upon his heart and work. It will never do for a long-time pastor to be other than a good man. Laziness, slackness in finances, irritability, become as evident as the day. A continued pastorate drives deeper and deeper into the pastor's soul the conviction that he must be right with God to accomplish right with man.

*"I have heard many speak, but this one man—
So anxious not to go to Heaven alone—
This one man I remember, and his look,
Till twilight overshadowed him. He ceased,
And out in darkness with the fisher-folk
We passed and stumbled over mounds of moss,
And heard, but did not see the passing beck.
Ah, graceless heart, would that it could regain
From the dim storehouse of sensations past
The impress full of tender awe, that night,
Which fell on me! It was as if the Christ
Had been drawn down from Heaven to track us home,
And any of the footsteps following us
Might have been His."*

—Jean Ingelow.

Blessings to Others

THE BLESSINGS TO OTHERS IN A CONTINUED PASTORATE

NO WORDS are adequate to express the blessings which come to our world through a growing and continued pastorate. There is a blessing first of all to the immediate congregation.

A growing and continued pastorate enables the congregation to have confidence in the pastor as their spiritual leader. Confidence is a plant of slow growth. It is different from respect for a man's office, different from sympathy with the man's work, different from affection for the man himself. Respect for the pastor's office, sympathy for his work, and affection for the pastor himself may be secured in a very short time.

But confidence in him, in his purposes and in his ability, can come only when long time has passed in which the nature of the man has been proved. After the people have watched him in many trying circumstances and have seen him carry himself through them without loss of poise, sweetness or gener-

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osity, then they feel they have reason for trusting him; and when a new circumstance of difficulty arises, they do not relax faith in him, even though misunderstandings are in the air and others are predicting failure, but they withhold judgment and give him the benefit of their confidence.

Then too they have seen the affairs of the congregation under his guidance so often emerge from distress into calm, that they have at least a half expectancy, if not a full hope, that somehow in due time he will lead them out of their present difficulty successfully. They stand ready to listen to his suggestions and plans. They also stand ready to back him up when the hour of action is reached and to help him in his efforts. He becomes to them very much what the captain of a ship is to his sailors. And in the storm their one question is, "What says our captain?" and when they know his saying they accept it as a wise and safe judgment. All this is a great advantage to a congregation; it saves it from much irritation, anxiety and fear, and saves it too from much hasty, ill-advised and injurious action. Scarcely anything in the history of a congregation is more beautiful

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than the way in which a patient, loving pastor, trusted by his people, securely leads them through wildernesses into promised lands. In such a case both congregation and pastor are wise in believing the words of S. Weir Mitchell: "Children and men have moral measles sometimes. Only let them alone, and they will get well of themselves. There is a wise herb in the garden, and it is called Thyme."

How helpful, too, to a congregation is the continued acquaintance the long time pastor has with their individual and family life. Every home has its peculiar sorrow, its distinctive history, its special need. No stranger can have any idea of its hidden griefs, its forebodings, its burdens and its temptations. It often takes ten years and more to get so deep into family history that a pastor can understand what is absolutely unintelligible to the ordinary observer, though that observer lives next door to the family. He learns to be more charitable than a newcomer could be; he knows why it is that certain matters harshly condemned by the world at large, have an explanation that makes him gentle in judgment and even makes him pitiful. He grows to love people because he sees their need of love, and

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he feels that only love can ever soften some of their asperities and mollify their grievances and fill the desolatenesses of their hearts. It is thus he can enter into their joys, and into their sorrows, and into their perplexities with a sympathy and affection which are a blessing to the people themselves. His ministrations, private and public, are adapted to their conditions, and they know it. He becomes a very part of the people. He, as God's representative and as the church's minister, is linked into their lives, and without their realizing the fact, this linking into their lives serves to link them to God and to God's church; they have associations with God's church, in a hundred ways, that act as an anchorage to hold them to the recognition and respect of God. In the hour of burden or sorrow they are sure that this man who has helped them at other times will be glad to help them now, not in a perfunctory way, but as their friend, their brother, their father.

There is much, very much, to be said of the blessing a new pastor brings into a congregation. How wonderful it is that so soon he is accepted freely and that so soon his ministrations are a means of inspiration. The hearts

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of a congregation open to him and from the outset accord him a generous welcome; and perhaps immediately he becomes to them a strength, a wisdom, and a comfort that are thoroughly appreciated. And still is it not true, that the long-time friend is the friend whose presence imparts the sweetest and most restful satisfaction, and is it not also true that it is to the old-time friend that the heart instinctively turns when calamity is sudden and grievous? The old-time pastor who has known the every joy and every grief of a home for many years asks no unnecessary question and speaks no unnecessary rebuke. The sore spot is not made the more sore by his touch upon it, nor is the weary heart made the more weary by his injunction to it. It is often the new pastor whose fresh methods lead the soul to the Saviour; it is often, too, the old pastor whose patience, love and sympathy are at last the means God uses of bringing the soul into sweet and complete acquiescence with that Saviour.

There is a blessing also to the community, in a growing and continued pastorate. This advantage is not small. It counts large for the welfare of the kingdom. A pastor who lives

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long in a town or city where hundreds and perhaps thousands observe him, preaches by his very life and the sermon enters men's hearts to stay there. They learn to believe in him, and such belief steadies them and is salt to the entire neighborhood. It disarms criticism of the church. In spite of their supposed antagonism to the church, people accredit this man and accredit his cause. In their heart of hearts they acknowledge his faithfulness, integrity and benevolence, and they know that what he is, he is by the faith of the Son of God. A pastor staying for years in his place as William Adams did in New York City, as John Hall did there, as many a man has done in a less conspicuous residence, has become a pillar of truth to the community. The going away of such a man is a distinct loss to the moral and religious well-being of the community. There have been pastors in Chicago who drew the respect of the entire city to their unselfishness, highmindedness and outspokenness, so that their names were known and an utterance or an opinion originating with them held attention. The presence of such pastors made editors, merchants, mechanics and scholars feel safer. The

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community weighed their words and still more weighed their deeds. When such pastors ceased residing there, Chicago became the poorer and has been the poorer ever since.

What is true of a great city is even more true, at least is more perceptible, in a town or village. In such a town or village the long-time pastor becomes known to every one. Wherever he goes, he is understood to be God's man, who wishes advance to every virtue and who wishes ending to every vice. The children see him, and are reminded of his holy purposes. Men and women look out from factories or farms as he passes, and their view of life ceases to be entirely material. In matters of education, of civic advancement and of general public welfare he can often do what none but a long known, highly respected and thoroughly trusted citizen can do.

Then there is a third blessing in a growing and continued pastorate, the blessing to the Church at large.

It steadies other pastors. Pastors are fearfully exposed to the tendency to restlessness. Their work is a trying one, to heart and brain and nerves. It starts with large purposes and wide horizons. It soon faces small accom-

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plishments and narrow results. The temptation to discouragement thus becomes great. Besides, often there are financial burdens that rest with heavy weight on a pastor; there are factions in his present charge that almost distract him; and he has so much less opportunity for study than he desires and than he is sure exists elsewhere. Surely he and his family could accomplish so much more under different circumstances! There are as many reasons as there are individual pastorates why a pastor at times feels that he must give up his present charge and go elsewhere. The result is that pastors move about with much rapidity, and a general condition of changeableness exists—though any field in which a pastor may be is larger than he can possibly fill.

When, then, fellow pastors see one of their brethren continuing constant, especially if they are acquainted with his perplexities and limitations and so-called reasons for heavy heartedness, they are helped to stand faithful in their own lots. His plodding industry, cheerful intrepidity and sweet patience hearten them. They have their bad hours, when it seems as though they could not stay another day where they are, but they think of their

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brother who keeps at his post and will not give up, and his firm bravery quiets and cheers them. Many a long-time pastor seeing his fellow ministers on the move, has said to himself: "This restlessness is unfortunate for the church and unfortunate for my brethren. I will stay just where I am and will not go away, however attractive the invitation; and thus I will try to remedy this restlessness."

Continued pastorates are a blessing to missionaries.

Especially is this true of missionaries in foreign lands. They know whom to think of in the old places and pulpits. They know who are thinking of them, with an interest not late born, but born years ago when the missionaries were younger and fresher and less worn. They can see the old-time pastor in the very church where they were children, or where they were married or ordained. It seems to them as though as missionaries they sustained a more vital connection with the home churches because all is so familiar and close. They are cheered by this sense of solidarity and sympathy. They know where to turn for counsel and help. When their sorrows come they are sure that the old-time

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pastor will lead the old-time congregation in prayer for them as no other than he could do.

Such continued pastorates are a blessing to the denomination as a whole.

So far as a long pastorate is known in the denomination it tends to impart a sense of stability to the denomination. It is an offset to the charge that ministers are always on the move. In the world at large it secures continuity of life to denominational recognition, weight and influence. In the denomination itself it makes the denominational body seem more compact and permanent. It gives the readers of its denominational papers names with which they are acquainted, and causes those readers to have a fresh allegiance to the denomination as they see that such names stand for the true, the brave and the useful. It allows the denomination's Boards to have pastors whose residence is known, and in the hour of emergency those Boards are sure where they can appeal for relief.

And once again a continued pastorate is a blessing to the whole Church of Christ.

The man who long abides in his pastorate, particularly if he is in a prominent place, ceases to be merely the representative of a denomin-

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ation; he becomes the representative of Christendom. Spurgeon of the Tabernacle, and Joseph Parker of the City Temple, are never thought of by most people who read their words, under their denominational name, but under the all embracing name of Christian. We all feel that such men belong to us as well as to the Baptist or Congregational Church; and we rejoice, all Christendom rejoices in the men who, for a generation of years, can stand and who do stand in a pulpit, speaking words of heavenly wisdom and living lives of Christ-likeness. When Christendom, not denominationalism, counts up its jewels, it names such men and calls them all her own. And they are her own, for they have made most helpful contribution to her glory.

It is true, very true, that much may be said in advocacy of the short pastorate. In 1864 a number of people believed it impossible to re-elect Mr. Lincoln to the presidency. Francis Lieber, wise student of political history and member of a select committee appointed to beseech Mr. Lincoln not to let his name be submitted for suffrage, wrote: "Individuals wear out quickly in revolutionary times, were there no other reason than that

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familiarity with a name takes from it enthusiasm. Even Napoleon would not have been able to mount and bridle the steed of revolution had he come in at first. The fact is that there is no spark of that enthusiasm or inspiriting motive force, call it what you may, for Mr. Lincoln, without which you cannot move so comprehensive an election as that of a president. We must have a new man, and we cannot have him without Mr. Lincoln's withdrawal. Oh! that an angel could descend and show him what a beautiful stamp on his name in history such a withdrawal would be."

Yes, there is charm and power in a new name oftentimes. But Professor Lieber was wrong concerning the old name of Mr. Lincoln. That old name fortunately was presented for the suffrage of the people in November, 1864, and old though it was and because it was old, old in devotion, old in burdens, and old in trustworthiness it carried every voting state of the Union but three.

There may be charm and power in the old as well as in the new. The meteor dashing across the sky with its beautiful path of light is one thing; the northern star standing steady in its place is another thing. The pastorate

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that startles the world by the almost instantaneous conversion of its scores and perhaps hundreds challenges our attention to the light it creates, and—sometimes challenges it to the darkness it leaves. The pastorate that never startles, never dazzles, but year after year remains steadfast, giving true guidance to all eyes, of the child and of the man, of the poor and of the rich—whether on land or water, in joy or sorrow, such a northern star pastorate certainly has its own blessed mission for our earth.

As the words of this book come to their close, the heart of the writer leaps forward for its final expression of interest in the theme he has been presenting. He is fully aware that many a pastor regards the work of the present-day pastorate as peculiarly difficult. The details of a pastor's life are innumerable; the burden of raising money for beneficence is oppressive; the spirit of worldliness that is abroad strikes dismay to his soul; and the hearts of many, engrossed in the material and temporal, offer no opening to his appeals.

All this may be true, true at least to a large degree. And still this also is true, that only

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the pastor who himself carries burdens can sympathize with others who carry burdens; and this also is true, that the work waiting to be done by the pastor is a work that must be done—if Christ is to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Fidelity to Christ and devotion to men summon every pastor to new and larger consecrations. Men *must* be reached, helped, comforted, saved, and we must be the ones to reach them. In some respects the pastorate never so constrained to sweetness of spirit, persistence of purpose, mastery of circumstances and unselfish helpfulness as to-day. We need to look long at Him who, though He existed in the form of God, emptied Himself and taking the form of man's servant became obedient even unto death. What are our details and embarrassments and refusals compared to His?

We need, too, to open our souls to their widest, that the cleansing winds of the Holy Ghost may blow through them and the quickening fires of the Holy Ghost may enkindle them. The Holy Ghost who rejoices in the opportunity of manifesting His power, waits for such an opportunity in us. He will not leave us to weakness. He will come to us, and

Blessings to Others

in Him and through Him we shall do the work of heeding the flocks over which He has made us overseers.

The world cannot prosper without us. Every time we leave our work undone, the world suffers. Christ Himself is depending upon us. He bids us move forward, keeping brave, cheerful and plodding. Just so certainly as we aim to grow, in knowledge of the truth, in sympathy with our fellows and in effectiveness in labor, and diligently use the means of growth, just so certainly will He grant us His benediction. Our work does not fail, and it never will fail. Every man of us is always bringing nearer the day when mankind shall become the one flock of the One Shepherd!

In this high hope and in this glad anticipation we lift our hearts toward Christ, and we say:

“O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

“Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

The Growing Pastor

“Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong;

“In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future’s broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live.”

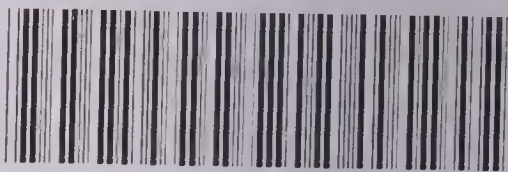
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